



*Vicinity of the
Conoidal hill in
the Valley of Stones.*

Picturesque Excursions in Devonshire and Cornwall ...

Thomas H. Williams

PICTURESQUE
Excursions
IN
DEVONSHIRE AND CORNWALL.

BY
T. H. WILLIAMS,
PLYMOUTH.



DEVONSHIRE.

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The Third Excursion In Devonshire,

INCLUDING

**Tamerton Foliot, Maristow, Buckland
Monachorum, Lidford, Oakhampton,
and Drewsteinton.**





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PREFACE

This third excursion in Devonshire, was undertaken as a relaxation from painting, and was intended to give, in slight sketches, the most striking scenery of the comities of Devon and Cornwall. An intimate local knowledge and a passion for the beauties of nature, necessarily introduced the author to scenes which it would be difficult for a casual observer to discover; and wishing to communicate to the public in the least expensive manner the knowledge of the picturesque treasures of these counties, the plates are all executed by himself from his own drawings; however he may regret the defects of their execution, he is certain they will be found accurate by those who are acquainted with the scenes which they represent.

A new and it is hoped an improved plan, will be followed in the subsequent publication of this work; and as it is thought more convenient that the account of Cornwall (intended to have been given in this volume) should form a separate publication, the new series will commence with an excursion in that county, for which materials are now collecting. The beautiful river Plym, from its estuary at Saltram to its source on Dartmoor, on account of the uncommon variety of its views and its proximity to Plymouth, will, probably, follow next, as the drawings are in a considerable state of forwardness, particularly the romantic bridge known by the name of Old Plym Bridge, and the charming scenery about Cann Quarry, the Vale of Bickley, and the Rocks of Dewerston. The chief inducement to the alteration proposed in the publication of the second part of this work is the obvious advantage of a more commodious form,

which, while adapted for the pocket, would be of a size sufficient to admit of the greatest correctness in the Views. From this consideration (the publication in numbers being discontinued) the continuation of the work will be printed in a neat small octavo volume. The etchings will be very highly finished and the subjects selected from the alternate scenery of both counties: to commence with an excursion in Cornwall, as before mentioned. To accommodate those subscribers who may wish for uniformity, a sufficient number of copies will be printed for their use upon a large paper, to correspond with the present volume.

Plymouth, August, 1804.





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**PICTURESQUE EXCURSIONS IN
DEVONSHIRE.**

VIEWS
in
DEVONSHIRE.



The First Excursion.

"The generality of mankind, in civilized countries, look on Nature with indifference. They are in the midst of her Works, and they admire only human grandeur."

St. Pierre.

The village of St. Budeaux, alias St. Bude, is situated about four miles to the north of Plymouth, on an eminence near the Tamer, which commands, on every side, an unbounded prospect of fertility, and picturesque beauty. Not only the artist, but the general admirer of nature, may here find inexhaustible gratification. Extensive scenes, rich in diversity of objects, exhibit, at every step, the most beautiful combinations; while the more confined scenery, composed principally of woody dells, interspersed with cottages, abounds with prospects of romantic seclusion and simplicity rarely to be equalled. Every thing, indeed, that can charm in Nature, every thing that can add grandeur or beauty to the landscape, conspires to adorn the village of St. Budeaux, and its neighbourhood.

The road, from Plymouth and Dock, to this interesting place, is, for the first three miles, the same that leads to Saltash-passage, and affords many pleasing views; among which the village of Weston-mill merits particular notice. It is seated at the head of a small inlet of the Tamer, environed by hills, which surround it like an amphitheatre, "From storms a shelter, and from heat a shade." The Turnpike-house, with a small bridge thrown across the river; the mill, and the stream which supplies it; in short, all the circumstances connected with this sweet spot, are so happily disposed, that, in

almost every point of view, whether from the road, or the sides of the hills, they form a beautiful combination. The pleasure however does not arise solely from picturesque effect: the tranquil aspect of this little village awakens in the mind the sentiment of ruralicity and domestic quiet, and heightens the charms of nature. In confined prospects this is generally a pleasing union. Extensive scenes owe much of their effect to the variety of objects presented, which, in a cultivated mind, excite an infinite train of associations. Devoid of this variety, they inspire elevated and enlarged sentiments; yet, in both cases, perhaps, the gratification they afford, though considerable, is vague, the imagination being chiefly interested; but there is a peculiar pleasure arising from the contemplation of domestic happiness, when thus connected with rural beauty, which awakens the best feelings of the heart.



Plate 3 – Weston Mill.

Amidst the jarring discords of public life, the social principle becomes feeble and inert; the vices and the miseries of society render the soul insensible to the tender sympathies of Nature; but the pure charms of the country, the quiet, simplicity, and innocence of rural life, are so congenial to the heart of man, that they seldom fail to tranquillise the perturbations of worldly anxiety, and renovate the dormant affections.

'O! Friendly to the best pursuits of man.
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace.

Domestic life in rural leisure pass'd!
Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets.'

COWPER.

The road immediately beyond Weston-mill presents, from its steepness, a very formidable ascent, which is, however, occasionally relieved by a pleasing retrospect of the village. A cottage at the summit has the very appropriate name of 'Traveller's Rest.' A little beyond this, you leave the Saltash road to the left, and arrive at the village of King's Tamerton, consisting of five or six cottages; some of which are the most picturesque we have seen in Devonshire. Their tall chimneys, projecting in front of the house, a circumstance common in this county, have a very happy effect; while the surface of the walls, and the roofs, encrusted with lichens and mosses of a thousand hues, exhibit specimens of colouring not easily imitated or described. These beautiful sportings of Nature would be totally lost, if the custom, so prevalent in many parts of Wales, of white-washing the walls, and even roofs, of cottages, were fashionable here; but either from the taste or indolence of their inhabitants, these rural abodes are not yet likely to be deprived of their cheap ornaments; the Artist may therefore consider himself secure in his possessions, and continue to admire those ornamental decorations of Nature, which so well supply the place of architectural embellishments.



Plate 4 – King's Tamerton.

The Lynner, or St. Germain's River, as it is commonly called, is an interesting feature in the view from this village; in conjunction with which it forms a beautiful subject for the pencil. Mount Tamer, the seat of the late Captain Sir Thomas Byard, well known for the distinguished part he sustained in Lord Duncan's memorable action with the Dutch off Camperdown, stands on the brow of an acclivity adjacent to King's Tamerton, and commands a fine view of the surrounding country; the prospect, however, is seen to greater advantage from some broken ground which rises rather to the eastward of the house. Here, after toiling up the long ascent from

Weston-mill, in which curiosity is excited by partial disclosures, a most magnificent prospect displays itself; composed indeed of very dissimilar parts, but admirably combined, so as to form a perfect whole.

'The villa trim, the hamlet snug and warm;
The meadows grassy green, or waved with corn;
The river's blue extent, the bright'ning bays,
And tow'r-crown'd towns, and steeples, spiring tall;
The waters motion all, with stately fleets.
That proudly bear their bulk along, and shade
Old Neptune's green domain with swimming woods,
Pregnant with wanton winds; and painted barks,
On gales of pleasure borne, or business bent,
That glide incessant o'er the shifting scene.'

BIDLAKE.

A descending road in the foreground, and two or three of the picturesque cottages before noticed, are most happily disposed. Beyond these the Tamer recedes 'in long perspective to the stretching eye,' and forms a grand feature in the view. It is that part of the river called the Hamoaze, the receptacle of those stupendous fabrics of human ingenuity, to which, for ages, England has chiefly owed its security and pre-eminence among nations. On the left banks of the river the town of Dock, with the dockyard, arsenals &c. is a busy and interesting scene; and on the opposite shore is seen the town of Torpoint, and Thanckes, the seat of Admiral Lord Graves, whose nautical skill is so justly celebrated. Mount Edgcumbe, rising

majestically in the distance, with its deep mantling of wood, closes the scene with much dignity.

Beyond the eastern extremity of the promontory, however, the eye catches a glimpse of the channel, which gives a peculiar character to the view — The Lynner is still seen to advantage on the right, retreating behind a succession of projecting promontories, till it is lost amongst hills which seem to oppose its farther progress. It winds, however, many miles farther, through a rich and picturesque country, and frequently varies its character; exhibiting sometimes a bay in miniature, and, where its banks become lofty, collecting its waters into the form of a lake. A prospect of this kind, independent of the effect it produces from what is termed picturesque combination, excites other sensations in the mind, perhaps no less pleasing: it is in fact a volume, full of information and amusement, to those who can enter into the spirit of it.

These fields, smiling with luxuriant vegetation, and teeming with nourishment for animals and man, exhibit the wonderful effects of human industry and perseverance. The soil, once covered with the indiscriminate productions of Nature, the rank exuberance of ages, which afforded to man neither nourishment or pleasure, is now become subservient to his labours, and amply repays his toil, not only with an infinite variety of food for his support; but a thousand delicious fruits, exquisite in flavour, and displaying innumerable beauties of form and colour. Those floating monuments of united skill and invention, whose materials flourished through the lapse of years, unheeded, in the solitude of the forest, recall the mind to

those early ages of the world, when the savage, in his little raft of wood or reed, the first rude effort of navigation,

'Crept fearful round each winding coast, nor dared,
Launch boldly venturous on the uncertain main;
Till sharp discovery traced the wond'rous stone,
That gives the trembling needle instinct-like,
And lively sensibility.'

BIDLAKE.

What a long series of progressive improvements between the periods which gave birth to these contrasted specimens of Art! — One, the first offspring of necessity, or formed, perhaps, from an impulse of vagrant curiosity, confined to purposes trivial and unimportant; the other fabricated to convey a community of individuals through trackless seas, whose extent the imagination can hardly conceive, to regions, which must otherwise have remained unknown; establishing between distant countries a mutual communication, and interchange of each others productions; extending the sphere of human knowledge, and increasing the comforts of life, by innumerable acquisitions; and every where discovering proofs of the wisdom and beneficence of Providence: at the same time, such is the perversity of man, becoming, in the hands of tyranny and injustice, the minister of desolation and death, and filling the world with calamity and outrage!

To a mind thus disposed every object will afford materials for enquiry and reflexion; and he. who, in surveying a landscape,

perceives only the relation of its parts, the harmony of colouring, and the proper distribution of light and shade, is but a superficial observer. Pictures are like those scenic representations in which the spectator's imagination must be the interpreter: the generality, however, never conceive any thing beyond what is literally represented. Leaving this diversified prospect in the rear, a new scene suddenly bursts on the sight; so instantaneous in its disclosure, and so different from the preceding, that it appears to be the work of enchantment. The Tamer, still a principal object, here resigns its channel-like aspect, and, apparently environed by the surrounding hills, assumes the character of a lake; presenting a wide expanse of water, where all vestiges of the harbour, and indeed every characteristic of the former view, are lost.

"But far the sinuous stream, its silver arms
Deep windings creeps along; and sees within
Its azure glass, wild rocks high beetling hang,
And fringed reeds that tremble to the gale.
And shadowy shapes; till Ocean's toiling tide
Its travels ends, and meets the pastoral flood,
That foaming, mingling, weds with mutual waves."

BIDLAKE.

This scene, though unlike the preceding, is however equally beautiful. An air of simple grandeur pervades the whole, and every object tends to inspire the most soothing tranquillity. The Church of St. Budeaux, on an eminence in the foreground; the Tamer, beneath it, presenting a broad surface, undisturbed, save by a solitary barge,

or perhaps the boat of a fisherman; the banks of the river, alternately woody and cultivated, and variously terminating; in some parts gradually shelving to the water, and in others descending abruptly; apparently uniting at last, in a semicircular form, which conceals the farther progress of the river; and beyond these a richly cultivated country, gradually melting into a mountainous distance; compose a picture, admirably calculated, indeed, to awaken all the fervour of enthusiasm; but which to be really understood must be seen.

Approaching the village of St. Budeaux, the prospect becomes partially concealed; but it is only to collect new powers, and to display the whole with superadded beauty and effect. The field adjoining the western side of the churchyard, is the spot from which this glorious view is seen to greatest advantage. In a still evening the tuneful bells of the little church of Landulph, on the remote banks of the river, add a new charm to the scene, wafting at times their full quire of melody on the ear; and again melting, like the notes of the Eolian harp, into tremulous and almost imperceptible vibration. There is a mysterious and melancholy pleasure excited by this simple music, of which most are susceptible. It touches a sympathetic chord of the heart, and awakens recollections the most sublime and pleasing. — The solemn dirge of the funeral bell, connected with the ceremonies of the dead; the cheerful peal which enlivens the days of amusement and rejoicing, and which is also the memento of religious homage; these united remembrances concur in producing a mingled sensation of ineffable complacency and tenderness!

The church of St. Budeaux is a simple edifice, and, though devoid of architectural embellishment, possesses much picturesque beauty. Unnoticed, however, as it may be, by the antiquarian, a circumstance connected with its foundation, will probably preserve the remembrance of this humble pile, when the more splendid monuments of ancient times shall be totally forgotten!



Plate 5 – St. Budeaux Church.

The parish church of St. Budeaux stood originally at the distance of nearly a mile from its present site, in a very unhealthy situation near the water's edge; but in the beginning of the fourteenth century, the whole fabric was taken down, and rebuilt, with the same materials, on the spot where it now stands. The expense of this laudable undertaking was defrayed solely by Robert Budokshed, Esq. who resided at the mansion house of that name, in the parish of St. Budeaux. By a seeming fatality, his own daughter, who died shortly after, was the first person whose remains were deposited within the precincts of the new pile; a circumstance which, at that dark period,

no doubt, excited many pious and superstitious conjectures. The account of this gentleman, and his meritorious conduct, contained in 'Prince's Worthies of Devon,' is so curious that we think it worth transcribing.

Robert Budeokshed, Esq. was born in this county (Devon), about the year of our Lord 1360, at the ancient mansion-house of the family, called by the same name, lying in the parish of St. Budeox, a daughter church to the town of Plymouth, near three miles to the north thereof, on the east side of the river Tamer, over against Salt-Ash, which standeth on the Cornish shore. This name, as most other ancient ones were, was variously written, as Bodokshed, Budokside, Budeokshed, and now vulgarly Budshed. A family this was of great note and antiquity in those parts: for Alan de Budokside lived in this place in the days of king Henry III., whom succeeded, in the male line, no less than thirteen generations. They all matched into very honourable families of this and the neighbouring counties, as Pomeroy, Halwel, Strode of Parnham, Prouz, Trencreek, Champernon, and divers others. This gentleman of whom we are speaking, married Ann, daughter of Sir Thomas Pomeroy, by whom he had issue, Thomas Budokshed, high-sheriff of the county of Devon, An. 26 king Hen. VI. They much advanced their patrimony by marrying the daughters and heirs of Trevallsade, and Trencreek of Trenhall, which last was the mother of Robert, now before us.

He was a person of great worth, and deserves a place in the register of honour: more especially for two qualifications, the best ornaments of a Christian and a gentleman, his piety, and his charity. Such was his piety, that he was the sole founder of the now parish church of St Budeox aforesaid, a very neat and handsome pile. This he did for the better and more decent

solemnizing the worship and service of Almighty God; a work most deserving honour and esteem, above other in the just acknowledgment of all who have any veneration to religion. It was the great argument which the Jews made use of to our Saviour, why he should heal the centurion's servant, telling him plainly, 'That the man was worthy, wherefore he should do this for him, for, say they, he loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue,' St. Luke vii. 5, As if this were the most evident instance of his love, to prepare them a proper place for the public service of God.'

'But then the charity of this good man was conspicuous in this, that in building the church in the place where it now standeth, he particularly consulted (what is justly acknowledged the most valuable of all temporal blessings) the health of his neighbours and parishioners. The parish had a church in it before this time, (such as it was) but it stood, it is said, in a remote and unhealthy place, too near the water side. Which great inconvenience this gentleman piously and christianly considering, at his own cost and charge he pulled down the old, and erected a new church, in a more healthy and convenient place, as may be now seen.'

'But see his fate, or rather the inscrutable event of Providence; this gentleman's own daughter was the very first that hanelled it, as the place of her burial. This ancient family failed, in the issue male, upon the death of Philip Budokshed, whose three sisters became his heirs; who thus disposed of themselves in marriage. — Winifred unto sir William Gorges; Elizabeth unto John Amidas, of Plymouth; and Agnes unto Oliver Hill, of Shilston. — Winifred brought Budokshed unto the family of Gorges, in which name it continued two or three generations; and then sir Arthur Gorges sold it unto — Trevill, and

Lethbridge Trevill, Esq. is now lord thereof. Mr. Budokshed lieth buried in his own church, whose whole pile is his lasting and visible monument.'

The memory of those who erect splendid edifices, only to record their power or magnificence, is soon consigned to oblivion; while the fabric, consecrated to beneficent purposes, raises in the hearts of men an indelible monument to perpetuate the remembrance of its founder! Gorges, the famous partizan of royalty, who lately commanded a considerable body of the Chouans in Brittany, it is said, is the only surviving descendant of the family of that name, which was once in the possession of Budshed, as it is now called; but by what means he has become thus estranged from his country, does not appear to be known. Budshed was lately the property of Sir Harry Trelawney, and is at present in the possession of G. H. Clark, Esq. Of the building we shall speak hereafter.

In the churchyard of St. Budeaux is a tomb-stone which the village sculptor has taken some pains to decorate. Three or four trunkless heads, in all the naked simplicity of ugliness, are ranged at the top of the stone; and lest their nature might be misunderstood, the artist kindly informs the reader (like the painters of old, who used to write under their productions the names of the objects represented) that 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven!' In surveying these receptacles of mortality, one cannot help observing a striking difference in the records of its inhabitants. The inscriptions of the Rich and the Powerful recite nothing but their virtues and good qualities; while those of their inferior neighbours relate only the afflictions they have borne, and the miseries and uncertainty of life. Moralists, on

the contrary, continually assert that wealth and power corrupt the heart of man, and that virtue and happiness are rarely found but in the humbler walks of life. Whose authority is to be preferred in this case, may not perhaps be easily determined.

The late rector of this parish, the Rev. Tho. Alcock, is spoken of as a character marked with many singularities: his, however, were not the eccentricities of a warm and ardent imagination, disdaining the trammels of prejudice and prescription; many appear to have been the offspring of an over-anxious solicitude respecting worldly matters; and others may be ascribed to a certain peculiarity of mind, which, though uniform, is frequently unaccountable. Mr. Alcock officiated at St Budeaux upwards of sixty years! — During the early part of his ministry he boarded and lodged at a farmhouse in the neighbourhood; from whence he removed on forming a matrimonial connexion, which brought him a house and a good estate. It is rather paradoxical, though not uncommon, that men, who have once experienced the inconveniencies attending a small income, should, nevertheless, on a change of circumstances, voluntarily continue those privations to which they were before subjected from necessity. Instead of an indulgence in those gratifications which their former restraints might reasonably warrant, the apprehension of being again reduced to dependence, seems to hang in terrorem before their imaginations, through the remainder of life: thus the fortune which Mr. Alcock had unexpectedly obtained, was managed (says the writer of an entertaining account of Mr. Alcock inserted just after his death in the European Magazine) with strict attention to the maxims of a too rigid prudence: indeed it must not be concealed that this was his

predominant, if not his only failing, and it threw a shade, over the brighter parts of his character, which nothing could dispel.

The homeliness of his dwelling no description can exceed: every article of modern convenience was excluded. His drawing-room was a miserable bed-chamber, with walls that *once* were white-washed, and where nothing appeared in opposition to their simplicity. Here he boiled his coffee, toasted his cakes, and entertained his guests at the same time; who forgot, in the charms of his conversation, the wretched apartment they were in, and the yellow time-worn bed on which some of them were perhaps obliged to sit instead of a sofa. His Sermons abounded with Latin and Greek quotations, and passages from the English poets; even the treasures of private epistolary correspondence contributed to the instruction of his congregation. Among other singularities, which occurred in his preaching, it should not be omitted that he delivered his own wife's funeral sermon; and once in the season of Lent, adverting to the custom of eating fish on fast days, he severely reprobated it, saying that, 'in fact, fish was the greatest stimulant to concupiscence; especially if eaten with rich sauces; and to prove his assertion, instanced the superior population of sea-port towns, where a greater proportion of that nutritive diet was used.' He married a second time at the age of seventy-eight, and a few years after, sold his property in Devonshire, and retired to his native parish of Runcorn, where he soon after died. 'The few works which he published,' says the same account, 'evinced much genius, and his memoirs of the life of Dr. Nathan Alcock, his brother, are an admirable piece of biography.'

Mr. Alcock acquired much credit by confuting an hypothesis of the late Dr. Baker, relative to a disorder of the bowels, called the cider colic, which is supposed to be occasioned by the use of new cider. The Doctor finding that in the process of making cider, utensils partly composed of lead were used, imagined, that it became impregnated with this pernicious metal: accordingly he procured some cider which had been bottled, and having analyzed it, he found precipitated at the bottom several small round particles of lead. This circumstance appearing to be a full confirmation of his opinion, he immediately published the result; and every body thought it extremely plausible. Mr. Alcock, however, having considered the subject, and being, probably, more conversant with household affairs than the Doctor, satisfactorily proved that those same particles of lead, supposed to be imbibed by the cider, were no other than small shot, which being commonly used in cleaning bottles had been accidentally left in the bottom of them!

Thus perhaps a revolution in the machinery of cider presses, &c. was prevented by this simple discovery. Many hypothetical systems, enveloped in the mysteries of science, but founded on infinitely less plausible grounds, would, probably, share the same fate, could they be so readily investigated; but while philosophers are less zealous for the discovery of truth, than the establishment of their own opinions, and would rather sacrifice the former, than relinquish the latter, error and absurdity will continue to be propagated among mankind.

Leaving the dissensions of men, however, let us continue to trace the harmonies of nature. The road to Budshed is also an indirect road to the village of Tamerton. After a gradual descent of about half a mile,

enlivened by new combinations of the scenery beheld from the church, you arrive at Budshed Wood, from which there is a beautiful view of the Lake of Tamerton; another arm of the vagrant Tamer. The wood slopes in front to the edge of the water, on the opposite side of which the lofty steep of Worley rises majestically, covered with wood to the summit, except where a bold rock, emerging from this umbrageous mantle, like a ruined castle, opposes its grey tints to the deep colour of the surrounding foliage. This is a ruin, however, on which time will have little influence. The mighty labours of man soon mingle with the dust; but these monuments of Nature are unalterable!

The mountains of Dartmoor still terminate the view. Continuing the descent, you leave the Lake of Tamerton rather to the left. As you approach the bottom, the water again appears; but it is only a branch of the lake, which, quitting the main stream, wanders through a narrow dell, where it conduces to form a scene of the most exquisite beauty and simplicity – It is a spot sacred to repose – Every thing conspires to concentrate the thoughts, and tranquilize the mind – The distant prospect disappears – The serenity of the water is heightened by the solemn gloom of the woods on its banks; and the hills, as if conscious of the treasure they embosom, surround this enchanting vale, and exclude every other object*. By an irregular path you cross a little bridge, formed of a plank thrown over a narrow part of the inlet, which conducts you, through an embowered lane, to the cottage of a fisherman, a few paces above the water; the picturesque aspect of which can only be equalled by its internal neatness, and the simplicity of its inhabitants. Behind the house is a little orchard, with a rill of water pure as crystal; and before it, a

garden of appropriate size. – Every thing here is in miniature. – The bridge is a Lilliputian one; and a boat which the tenant of this enviable abode possesses, will hardly contain two persons.

* A view of this interesting scene will be given in the next Number.



Plate 6 – The Cottage Scene.

The mind reposes with more pleasure on these confined scenes, after having dilated its powers in prospects of greater variety and extent. Contrast and variety indeed are necessary to keep up its attention; and in this respect, the lover of Nature will no where find more

ample gratification than in the diversified beauties of Devonshire; the variety of objects, and the rapid change of scenery, in this county, are truly astonishing. The views on our sea-coasts are uncommonly grand; the Tamer and the Tavy, with their various collateral branches, adorn an indescribable succession of beautiful scenes, and in many, places, assume the characteristics of a lake; our rivers are numerous, and pursue a devious course; sometimes foaming between immense rocks of granite, through a mountainous and barren country; at others gliding in silence through vales of Arcadian beauty; now lost in the depth of solitary woods, and now sporting amidst the gayer scenes of cultivation. Our cottages are perhaps more picturesque than in any other part of England; and we are not wholly destitute of those monuments of pristine magnificence and power, which are so numerously scattered over this island; in short, nothing is wanting but the disposition to enjoy these pre-eminent advantages of Nature.



Picturesque Excursion
in
Devonshire & Cornwall
by
J. H. Williams,
Plymouth.



A TOUR TO THE NORTH OF DEVON.

The romantic character of the North of Devon, combining along its coast scenes of uncommon grandeur and beauty, which rival, according to travellers, the wonders of North Wales, had for some time excited in me the strongest desire to undertake a tour thither, with the most pleasing expectations of picturesque enjoyment. In the Autumn of 1798, after a stormy passage of sixteen hours across the channel, I landed at Ilfracombe from Swansea, but fatigue prevented my seeing otherwise than in a transitory manner, the scenery of that singular place, which with Clovelly to the west, cursorily struck me as being finely adapted for the pencil. Lynton, Lynmouth, the Valley of Stones and other places, were yet to be seen; of which I had reason to believe the descriptions hitherto published contained either exaggerated or imperfect delineations.

Unaccompanied, I left Plymouth on an evening in July, with the intention of sleeping at Horrabridge, about ten miles on the northern road. The wind was propitious, an object of no small importance to south Devonians who undertake pedestrian rambles; for with a south-west wind we infallibly have rain, and our greatest, or only hope of continued fine weather, is when it blows from the north. The interesting prospects seen from Roborough-down, over which the high road is carried, such as Bickleigh, Shaugh, Meavey, and part of Dartmoor on the right; the rich woody valleys of Place and Maristow, (between which is Denham bridge) the river Tamer and part of Cornwall on the left, will be severally described in future excursions.

At the end of the Down, after a true Devonshire declivity, the pleasant little village of Horrabridge appears, divided by the river Walk, over which is a picturesque bridge. A rich and extensive view is seen from the descent, consisting of several woody valleys, the churches of Walkhampton and Sampford Spiney, numerous farms and cottages, with Pew Tor, Staple-torr, and other Torrs in Dartmoor, bounding the distance. Having been recommended to the White Hart inn, by some friends who had experienced the civility of the landlord, I remained there for the night, and though a pedestrian, had no reason to be dissatisfied with my accommodation.

In the morning the rain descended in torrents; the wind being south, there was sufficient cause to expect its continuance: fortunately by the time breakfast was over, it had considerably abated of its violence, and with the assistance of an umbrella, I ventured to proceed. The next stage was Oakhampton, the regular road to which is through, or by Tavistock; leaving this on the left to save two or three miles, a rugged ascent presented itself, formed from the late heavy rains into a channel for a stream of water. With perseverance this was surmounted, and the road, hitherto confined by high inclosures, now wound over a small heath or down. On a fine day it may be interesting, as many of the Dartmoor Torrs are seen from it; but all my attention was required below, to avoid flouncing through deep pools, or stumbling over the inequalities of the place. In this predicament and with a misty atmosphere, there was little occasion for rapture, and with no other wish than to regain the high road, I walked rapidly on.

I passed many objects, such as Hartford bridge, etc., which, under more favourable circumstances, might have been productive of much gratification, and reached Lane-end and the desired high road about ten o'clock. From Horrabridge to this place is about six miles; it consists only of a turnpike, an inn, and a few old houses. At a short distance, on each side of the road, are mines, then in working; whether they contained tin or copper, I had neither time nor opportunity to inquire. The road was now for miles over downs, and the sun, bursting from the clouds, diffused cheerfulness over the face of nature. The effect of the rains was visible around me; torrents from the mountains were rushing down to increase the rivers already surcharged, while the distant Torrs were still enveloped in dark clouds. In the foreground were those sheep of a small species, accounted of exquisite flavour, which give celebrity to Oakhampton; bounding from bank to bank, at the return of fine weather, or enjoying in stillness the luxury of the sunshine.

The prospect on the left began to expand, and the well known Brent Torr rose with dignity to the view. This Torr, though 20 miles from Plymouth, is the first Devonshire landmark seen by mariners from the British Channel; and the church on its summit, according to tradition, owes its origin to the following occurrence. A merchant, in one of our colonies, wishing to return with his wealth to his native country, embarked full of those hopes, which men in whose bosoms the *amor patriae* is not extinguished, so fondly indulge. The vessel, wafted by light breezes, pursued her course for some days without interruption; but on an evening symptoms of a change appeared, and by break of day the ship became in great danger. The tempest, in short, increased to such a degree as to excite the most alarming

apprehensions of instant destruction. The agonized merchant, in the fervency of prayer, vowed that should Providence spare him from the storm, he would raise a church on the first land he saw. The vessel fortunately rode out the tempest, and this Torr presenting itself first, on their approach to the western coast of the island, he piously performed his vow, by building the church on it's summit, to remain as a memorial of his gratitude and sincerity.

Further on the Down, Lidford Castle* became a prominent object; rich vales intersected the middle distances, and the hills of Cornwall, particularly the Rough-torrs, from their uneven, but highly picturesque outlines, rose from the horizon, imperceptibly mingling with the atmosphere, The downs on the right being above the level of the road, excluded the view, but the opposite side left nothing to wish for, it was so extensive and beautiful.

* Lydford Castle, and the famous bridge and waterfalls, will be the subject of the 6th or 7th number of this work. The road was now alternately through partial inclosures, and over small heaths, until I reached Sourten, when it again entered an extensive down, and after toiling on it for seven or eight uninteresting miles, I arrived within sight of Oakhampton Castle, and was soon under it's ivy-covered walls.

It appears from the Domesday book that Oakhampton Castle was in the possession of Baldwin de Brioniis when that survey was made. He accompanied William the Conqueror into England, and was invested hereditary Sheriff or Viscount of Denshire, and Baron of Oakhampton. The Castle is considered by historians as being more

ancient than the times of the Conqueror. Baldwin's being the possessor when the above survey was made, is no proof of its having been built by him. The age of those great works which remain so long uninjured by time, can only be computed by centuries, and all inquiries of this kind can only be resolved by comparing their architecture with that of castles in a similar style, and of which we have more authentic documents.

Richard the son of Baldwin died without issue, and King Henry the First gave it to Richard de Redveris, whose son was banished by King Stephen for assisting Maude the empress. It again came into possession and continued with his family till Isabell married William de Fortibus Earl of Albemarle, by which union there were two children; Thomas, who died soon after, and Avilleria, married to Edmund Earl of Lancaster, but died without issue. Edward III. by a stretch of power created Hugh Courtney Earl of Devonshire, whose descendants enjoyed the title to the latter part of the reign of King Henry I. The dissensions of the houses of York and Lancaster interrupted the harmony of families, and the happiness of individuals was sacrificed to gratify their ambitions. The late Earl left three sons who were of the Lancastrian party. Thomas was taken at Towton field, and beheaded at York; and, to use Camden's words, Henry, his brother and successor, seven years after, drank of the same cup at Salisbury; the youngest, John, lost his life in the battle of Tewkesbury. The title was given by King Edward the Fourth to Sir H. Stafford of Southwark, who revolting from King Edwards authority about three months after his elevation to the title, was apprehended and executed at Bridgewater. For some time the Courtney family was in a state of obscurity, but Henry the

Seventh restored it to their descendant, Edward Courteney. This family was still subject to misfortunes, for one lost his head in the reign of Henry the Eighth, another came to an untimely death in Padua in Italy. To Charles Blunt, Lord Mountjoy, the title was then given, famous, according to Camden, for martial prowess, and as an encourager of learning.

The castle is pleasantly situated in a valley, through which the river Ock, or Ockment, flows in its way to join the Torridge. The Park opposite, once covered with woods but lately destroyed, exhibits a melancholy and neglected appearance: this to the eye of an artist is a considerable deduction from the effect of the castle, it being much beyond that period in which ruins excite the highest interest; sufficient should remain to enable the observer to pursue the connexion and intention of the parts, otherwise there are fewer links to preserve association. Tintern Abbey, the Castles of Ragland, Goodrich, and Berry Pomeroy,* individually, exclusive of collateral advantages, call forth our admiration; but when, like the two last, combined with poetical scenery, they produce an irresistible emotion of rapturous delight. It is to be lamented that the proprietors should not have preserved a ruin, once so interesting; but every object of nature and art in the country, is sacrificed to the vitiated taste for the dissipations of the metropolis.

* The admirers of those striking features in the scenery of a country, will hear with pleasure of the care which is taken by the Seymour family of Berry Castle, which from local situation equals any ruin of the kind in England; Lydford Castle has also been lately repaired, and may such laudable examples be

imitated by other proprietors. It will call forth the gratitude of the artist and the antiquarian.

With mixed emotions of resentment and regret, I proceeded to the town, (about half a mile from the castle,) uninteresting in its appearance, and without even a bush on the surrounding hills. There is something uncommonly chilling and repulsive in a town, or village, without trees; so uncivilized and unfixed, and so little seems the connexion with comfort or retirement, that every step from it is a matter of consolation. A strong inducement inclined me to enter, for otherwise, the road to the next place left it on the right; some refreshment was necessary after a walk of twenty-one miles, and inns contribute in no small degree to the comfort of pedestrians. After toiling up a steep road, which leads to Hatherleigh, and passing by an extensive moor, part of which I had crossed in the morning, called by the expressive name of Black, or Bleak-down, the sight of new scenes dissipated the impression of so dreary a view as the cheerless hills around Oakhampton; and the extensive distances richly coloured by the setting sun, afforded a luxuriant feast for the imagination.

Hatherleigh is pleasantly situated; a few trees thinly scattered about, render it more interesting than Oakhampton. As in other small towns, its best houses are those of the clergyman, the attorney, and the apothecary, "The Corinthian pillars of rural Society." With a few exceptions, the others are mud or cobwall cottages. Its distance is seven miles from Oakhampton. A lady from the north, on a visit at Plymouth, had favoured me with a route by the river side to Torrington: this it was my intention to have

pursued, but whilst at breakfast a post-chaise returning to Barnstaple arrived at the door: "Ye tir'd pedestrians, what would you have done?"

After a walk of seven or eight and twenty miles the preceding day, it was a temptation not to be resisted, and in less than an hour we were going on at a smart pace, in the road to Torrington. I had full leisure to survey the country, where the lowness of the hedges would permit; for in this road, as in many parts of our diversified county, they are much higher than a carriage; and the distances were woody and finely coloured. The post-boy pointed out the situation of Hinton, belonging to Lord Clinton. In common with the peasantry of this part of Devon, he pronounced the Hi, like Yea, and called it Yeanton. Mr. Cleveland, the Member for Barnstaple, has a house pleasantly situated on the left. The continued height of the hedges prevented any thing from being seen till Torrington burst on the sight. On the left of the descent to which is Cross, the seat of Mr. Stephens, a well built house, and with a handsome portico; but the front injudiciously remaining of a brick colour, presents a most unnatural contrast to the beautiful plantations around it. In towns it is not of any consequence, brick fronts mingle with the mass, and being seen nearer, and as parts of a whole, are rather pleasing by variety; but in the country effect should be studied according to nature, particularly for objects on elevated situations. Light grey, white, or a pale straw colour, oppose the most charming contrast to the variegated colouring of the successive seasons.

Our modern buildings in general, considered as parts of the landscape, are truly contemptible; and when time shall have

destroyed the few remains of antiquity we possess, our future artists will find the ruins of a modern house an indifferent substitute for an imitation, according to English costume, of those broken fragments of art in the paintings of Claude Lorrain. The dawn of improvement opens, and the present age is much indebted to the labours of an eminent artist* for a splendid publication on architecture. It includes three essays, with illustrative plates executed in a superior manner, on the application of the Roman, Grecian, and Gothic architecture, in the construction of modern dwellings, without any deduction of those conveniences introduced in the present style, or an increase of expense proportionate to the suggested advantages.

* Mr. R. Mitchell of Newman Street. It is the intention of this gentleman to unite the comforts of the internal part of one with the picturesque effects of the other; and it is to be hoped that a plan, the effect of which would so much improve the landscape, will be viewed by men of fortune in a true light, and in process of time we may expect our prospects to vie with the classic purity of the Italian.

On reaching the bottom of the hill the post-boy recommended me to walk over the bridge; part of it having been carried away by the river some time before: sufficient had been rebuilt for foot passengers, but carriages were obliged to pass below and reach the town by a more circuitous route. The scenery here was superior to any thing I had yet seen. Having a sketch book under my arm, and moving about for a pleasing position, the miller, a good natured communicative man, conjecturing what was going forward, as this

spot was calculated to call forth the latent sketching powers, civilly informed me, that the bowling-green to which he pointed, commanded a view much visited and admired. The irregularity of the bridge excited some surprise: it had been originally built on four arches; half having been carried away, as I observed before, the part rebuilding was constructed with one arch, supplying the place of the two others. The relative effect of it was preposterous, totally destroying the simplicity of the scene.

Ascending the road to the bowling-green, I overtook a man who related the narrow escape which two persons had of being involved in the destruction of part of the bridge. Warned by the inhabitants of the little village on that side, of the rapidity and increase of the river, which overflowed a kind of causeway from it to the road, and rendered the crossing it dangerous, they were so imprudent as to proceed, and without any difficulty gained the middle of the bridge. In vain they attempted to cross the causeway to the opposite side; the strength of the current rendered their exertions ineffectual, and they turned back, intending to sleep at the village they had left. To their surprise and terror, the increased height of the river had rendered it equally impracticable, and there was no apparent possibility of escaping until the waters subsided, of which at that moment there was little or no hope. They were now insulated in a situation of great danger, in the sight of spectators assembled on each side the river, and the bridge being seen to move, their destruction was considered as inevitable: But while in this state of agonizing suspense, the industry and ingenuity of some rustics had formed a rope from halters, and whatever they could collect of sufficient strength for the purpose; which, after many efforts, was

seized by the apparent victims, and, with many severe bruises, they were hauled to a place of safety. The bridge withstood the current till midnight, when half of it on the Torrington side was carried away.

This account ended just as we gained the summit, and the view from thence was very interesting; the river, at a distance below, silently gliding along, except where broken by a kind of weir, and lost beyond the bridge amid the foliage of beautiful trees, the bridge, now the preposterous bridge, rudely exposing it's ill-according arch, the mill house, the opposite village, the elevated ground above, the pleasing dispositions of the hills, and the red brick house at Cross, all presented themselves from this situation. Here art appears warring with nature; it is one of those spots where the smallest assistance from the labour of man was required to make it a perfect scene. A bridge was necessary for passing, when the river was swollen, but I am unable to conceive why it had not been entirely rebuilt, or the part added erected in conformity to the remains of the original; as it is at present, the effect of the view is considerably abated, if not spoiled.

About six in the evening we arrived at Barnstaple; the height of the hedges excluded all prospect, and eight or ten hills which we were obliged to walk the horses up, prevented our arriving at an earlier hour. Barnstaple, a populous and genteel town, is pleasantly situated on the river Taw over which is a well-built bridge; the walks are pleasant and diversified, particularly the north parade, and the walk by the river side to Tawstock. The houses, like those in towns

of some antiquity, are irregular, but many of the new ones are built with much taste.

A respectable bookseller's shop gives a favourable impression of the encouragement given to literature by the inhabitants. So general indeed is reading now become, that every little country town has its circulating library; which, though containing the lowest species of reading, yet if the taste is excited, selection, from the progression of knowledge, must necessarily follow. It is through the delightful medium of books that we are informed of the discoveries in science, the lives of illustrious men, and the political state of other countries; they give "a local habitation" to the effusions of poetic imagination, and convey in a small compass the concentrated wisdom of ages. He must be in a state of the most pitiable apathy who is insensible to the events which are passing around him; and to the great discoveries which have been made, and are still making in science, to which we are indebted for our security, and the enjoyment of every rational comfort beyond savage life. Infinite are our obligations to those real patriots, who, devote to practical philosophical investigations, which are not at all times productive of proportionable remuneration, those talents, which, directed in the more ambitious and crooked road of politics, might have led to titles and to wealth. The sublime science of astronomy, reduced by the divine Newton to mathematical demonstration, by developing the planetary system, the laws of the eclipses, and the various phenomena of nature, deprives superstition of the power to fetter mankind, through their ignorance or their fears. Commercial intercourse is extended over the globe by the gigantic invention of shipbuilding, and the perfection of navigation even enables the

mariner to proceed amidst the terrors of darkness and the fury of the elements. We are not indebted for these incalculable benefits to conquerors and heroes, whose only pleasure is destruction; but to inoffensive men, who have lived in retirement and study, who, while wearing out the "silver chord of life," in pursuits for the happiness of mankind, have frequently experienced their ingratitude, and at times, their most inveterate persecution.

On the following morning I left Barnstaple with an intention of seeing Tawstock church, near Tawstock House, the seat of Sir Bouchier Wrey, and which is full of the monuments of that family; but calling at Pyl, the residence of Mrs. Nicoletts, most pleasantly situated on the banks of the Taw, I changed my plan, and attended divine service with her amiable family at Tawton church. The sincerity and unaffected piety of a rural audience are irresistible where "The town has not tinged the country:" an emotion of resignation and abstraction from the concerns of the world is awakened, and a full and willing offering of gratitude is sent forth to the Deity. On those days men are brought back to nature, from which they are so continually departing: absorbed as they are in their pursuits of accumulation and ambition, some monitor is necessary to remind them of their duties and their mortality.

After the service, accompanied by Mr. J. Nicoletts, I ascended Cotton-hill, one of the striking features of the vicinage of Barnstaple, so named from the moss which grows in great abundance on the north-east side. The prospect from it was extensive and beautiful; innumerable objects were seen around, but the most striking were Tawstock, Tawton, Barnstaple, the Taw

stretching to the Bristol Channel, and Lundy Island; a most singular feature from it is the road to South Molton, which winds over the narrow summit of a chain of hills of the most irregular outlines. We were amply repaid the toil of ascending, and returned to Tawton by a nearer but more precipitous descent.

Bishop Tawton*, once the seat of episcopal splendour, but now more interesting to the artist as a simple village, is most delightfully situated on the Taw, an arm of it, over which is a small bridge, conveys the barges with limestone from Wales, close to the town.

* On the conversion of the West Saxons to Christianity by Borinus, who was sent by Pope Honorius, the Episcopal See, with the concurrence of Oswald, King of the Northumbers, was established at Dorchester in Oxfordshire. The West Saxon dominion extended over Berkshire, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somersetshire, Dorsetshire and part of Devonshire. King Kynegilsus was first baptised A.D. 636, and his son Cwichelm, the following year; St. Burinus, canonized in consequence of his successful mission, erected his seat at Dorchester, called by the Briton *Caer-Daure*, or *Caer-dorin*, situated between, and not very distant from the confluence of the Thame and the Isis; his jurisdiction, independent of the West Saxons, extended nearly over all Mercia, which consisted of seventeen or eighteen counties more.

To this Bishopric Devon and Cornwall were subject for twenty-fire years, when Kenwallus, or Cornwallus, having rebuilt the old church at Winchester, divided the diocese into two parts, and instituted Wina to the other Bishopric. Agilbert, or

Egilbert, who succeeded St. Burinus, A. D. 650, was so much offended at this division of his power, that he departed for France, and some time after was promoted to the see of Paris. Devon and Cornwall continued under the Bishop of Winchester till the 17th or 18th year of the reign of King Ina, A.D. 705; in this year, on the death of Hedda, and the accession of Bishop Daniel to the see of Winchester, in which diocese the kingdom of the West Saxon was included; it was, pursuant to a decree of a provincial synod, held under Brithewaldus, Archbishop of Canterbury, and at the desire of King Ina, divided into two dioceses, viz, of Winchester, and Shireborn (Sherborne in Dorsetshire,) and Daniel having Winchester, St. Aldhelm was promoted to Shireborne, and became its first Bishop.

Devonshire, Cornwall, Dorsetshire, Somersetshire, Wiltshire and Berkshire, came within, and continued under the jurisdiction of Shireborne for 200 years. On the death of Ethelward the 13th Bishop, a successful irruption of the Danes prevented any re-election for seven years, and the disturbed and unsettled state of those western counties prevented for some time any ecclesiastical establishment. The Pope, incensed at the neglected state of Christianity in these parts, threatened the son of Alfred with his curse, unless he appointed Bishops for the vacant sees. This produced a provincial synod, A. D. 905, under Phlegmundus, and the dioceses of Winchester and Sherborne were divided into five parts, and Bishops ordained for the new created sees. Authors are not agreed as to the number ordained; some say five, and others speak of seven, but leaving this to be decided by our learned antiquaries, I proceed to enumerate those allowed to have been created in one day, viz. Werstanus, or Westan, for Devonshire, who had his see at Tawton, since called Bishop's Tawton. Athelstan, or Adelstan, for Cornwall,

whose see was at St. Petrock in Bodmin, but afterwards removed to St. Germans. Athelhelm or Adelmus for Somersetshire, whose see was to be at Wells. Asserus, or Asser II. for Sherborne, (which included Dorsetshire, Wiltshire, and Berkshire) and Kenulphus, or Ceolulf, for Dorchester, in Oxfordshire. Westan, the Bishop of Tawton, was succeeded by Putta, who being slain by Uffa or his soldiers, the see was removed to Crediton.

On the opposite side is Tawstock, the seat of the Wreys, rising several hundred feet above the river, covered with wood, arranged with uncommon taste, and proportionable picturesque effect. The house itself happily accords with the scenery, and is of a chaste colour, which admirably contrasts with the profusion of green around it. Tawstock Church is seen below, embosomed in trees, which only leave the tower visible; and beneath this, on the margin of the river, rise a few picturesque cottages; it is altogether a scene of unequalled cultivated beauty. Retiring a little beyond the bridge at Tawton, to take part of the latter place as a foreground, Tawstock is then seen to great effect* On the evening we explored the woods of that charming place; the objects we had passed in the morning on the opposite side of the river, were successively presented to us in our walk to the church, and though not to be compared to the view from Tawton bridge, yet standing high in the scale of cultivated beauty.

An aged female inhabitant of a contiguous cottage procured us the keys, to the church, and we were admitted within its holy precincts. The monuments are numerous, and many of them of great antiquity: they were surveyed with less interest than I expected; a

more attentive perusal of the inscriptions might have caused more veneration, as it might have discovered the benevolence of the deceased, the encouragement given by him to science, his public spirit, or a proper diffusion of superfluous wealth. Can we feel for those insulated beings who withhold the beneficence of nature from its proper channel; and who neglect those ties which bind them to the affections of mankind, whose monuments frequently convey a tacit censure on their lives, and instead of veneration, are beheld with pity by posterity? A simple stone, the sacred memorial of an honest labourer, whose life had been spent in the profitable duties of agriculture, excites more interest than the most magnificent tomb, consecrated to misapplied wealth or voluptuous indolence.

* A view of this beautiful scene would have been given, but an accident in biting the plate with aqua fortis prevented it. It will be included in the Number descriptive of Illfracombe and Clovelly.



Plate 8 – Tawstock from Bishop's Tawton.

Emerging from the thick woods which arc around the church, we walked for some time close to the river; it was high water, and the barges, with rather unpicturesque sails, were going up to Tawton. We were soon obliged to leave the banks and wind up by an inlet, at the head of which we crossed, and ascending a path, through a fine wood, in which were seats opening on some of the river scenery, soon gained the summit; a descending zig zag road re-conducted us to the Taw. The path was now on a mount, erected to prevent the river from inundating the meadows on the left; a pleasing view of

Barnstaple is seen in the distance: and having admired an alcove erected by Mrs. Nicolettes on the opposite side, and matted with the beautiful moss from Cotton hill, soft as velvet, but changed from its original colour to a pale straw tint, we arrived after a diversified excursion at that place.

The next morning I left Barnstaple to see Lynton and the valley of Stones, Youldston, the seat of Sir John Chichester, is about seven miles on the road; I was prevented by a violent head-ach from viewing with attention his numerous collection of paintings; they appeared to be well worth the attention of the tourist. The remainder of the road till within four miles of Lynton, has nothing highly interesting, but when on the Down beyond Parracombe, the view of some stupendous hills on the left, nearly encircling a small valley, dotted with cottages, gives the first idea of the expected scenery on the coast.

Full of expectation I began to descend, and the first object which met my eye was the Bristol Channel reflecting the light of the sun, now sinking to the horizon; the Welch coast, after some attentive observation, was indistinctly seen, but little of Lynton was yet visible on account of the windings and steepness of the road; it appeared from this place to be near the beach and washed by the waters of the Severn. Every object here is on a grand scale; the descending road from the Down cannot be less than two miles, and produced no small degree of impatience till I entered the town. An inn by the appropriate and alluring name of the "Valley of Rocks," is near the entrance, where having given directions for my accommodation, I proceeded to explore the village. Leaving the inn on the left, a gentle

ascent conveyed me near the church, and here, rapt in admiration at the beauty of the scene, I was insensible to the approach of a gentleman who had arrived in the course of the day at this fascinating place, and who, after some conversation, requested me to accompany him into the churchyard. The view before me consisted of a part of Lynton, the church on the left, a bank of a picturesque form before, and hills of uncommon magnitude rising in the background, but sufficiently distinct to examine with the eye their surface, covered with vegetation, or grey projections of granite rock.

We passed over a stile into the churchyard; at the opposite end two or three persons were walking by the side of a low parapet wall which casually looking over, to my astonishment I saw the romantic town of Lynmouth several hundred feet below, of inexpressible picturesque beauty, and superior to any thing I had ever seen; it appeared more an illusion of the imagination than a real scene, and it was some time before I could survey with coolness the variety beneath me: every object except the hills was in miniature; bridges, cottages, and woody enclosures, lay sprinkled over the little vale of uncommon variety and individual interest.

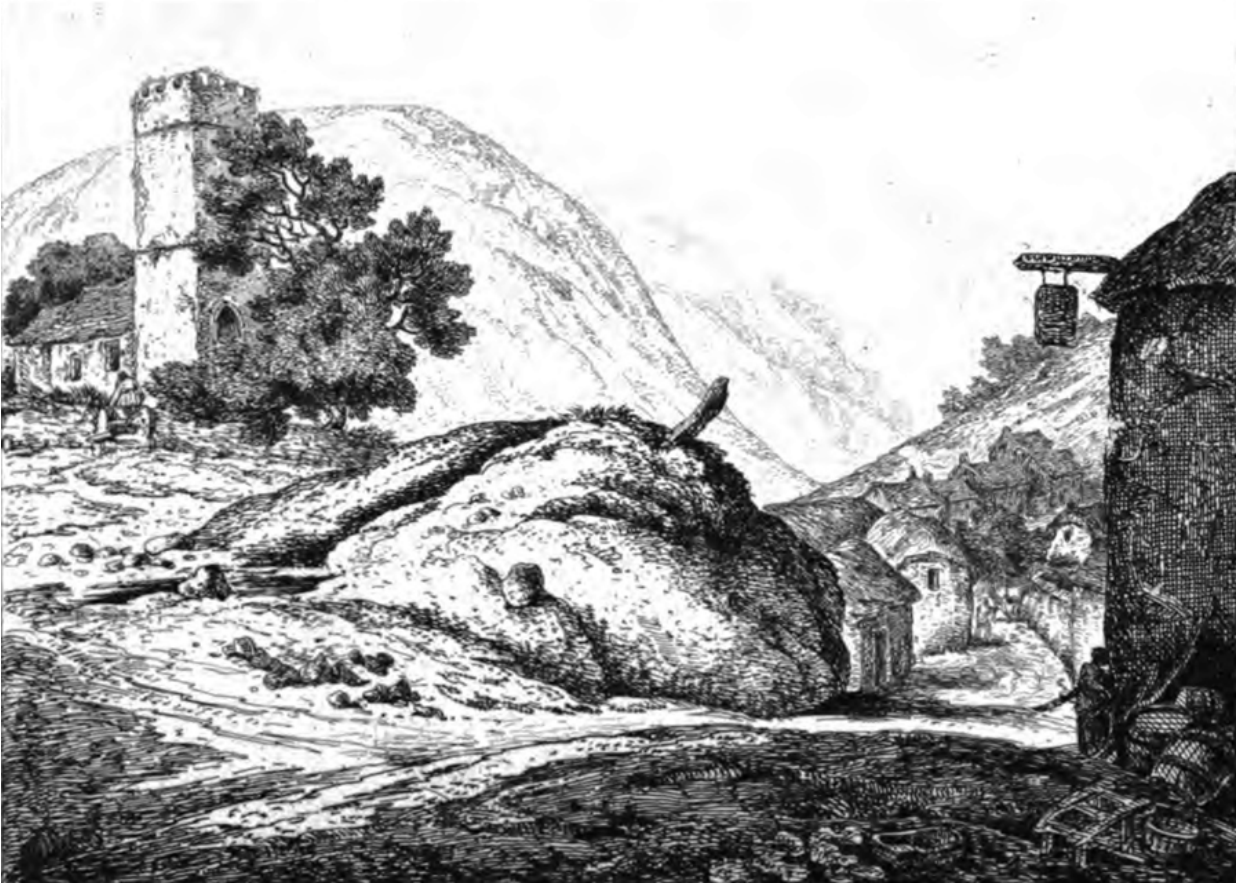


Plate 9 – Lynton Church.



Plate 10 – Lynmouth from the Churchyard.

On the left is its small pier; a sloop or barge, and two or three boats of lilliputian dimensions were on the beach, the tide being out, which by no means diminished the effect of the scene. The zig-zag descent from Lynton is occasionally seen stretching in perspective, from side to side, till lost amidst the wood at the entrance of the vale, it presently emerges and is carried over a stone bridge of one arch, and winding through narrow enclosures meets the eye near the second bridge, then becoming one of the striking features of this extraordinary place. The latter bridge has two arches, and affords a pleasing contrast to the other, which is shaded by trees; while this

being quite open, and the banks of the river distinctly seen: a salmon hatch and a weir are below it; and the water falling over large rocks, as in most of our Devonshire rivers, conveys in distinct vibrations the impressive and melancholy music of the vale.

A few cottages, a small manufactory and a lime-kiln adorn its opposite bank, behind which is a fairy lawn (belonging to a gentleman whose house is at the end,) bounded on the left by the tide or beach, and on the right by the base of those stupendous hills, over which winds the high road to the east of England, of a perpendicular appearance, and calculated to produce giddiness at the thought of descending; the perspective view of the river above the bridge is extremely beautiful, the sides of the combe* rise at least seven hundred feet from their base, and the greatest height of the hills about one thousand feet above the level of the sea; the entrance of another combe is seen on the right, being hidden by some high ground beyond the churchyard; through this the river flows which passes under the first bridge, but I was unable to perceive its junction with the large one or with the sea. Intending to pursue the course of the second combe, I left the churchyard and walked on the high ground which overlooks it; the water rushed with more fury over the rocks, and its sides were richly covered with wood; the hills rather increased in height beyond the other combe, and from the combination of parts I cannot conceive any river scenery more truly beautiful. Nothing was wanting but a picturesque tower rising amidst the distant foliage, or a cottage rearing its unassuming form on some verdant projection, spreading over the woods " *It's smoke, in many a rolling column light and blue,*" an emblem of domestic comfort, and of the rustic enjoyment of its peaceful inhabitants.

* *Combe, or Cwwmb, in Saxon, a valley.*

It was now twilight, but the magic prospect from the parapet wall impelled me to take a farewell view before I returned to the inn; I found the gentleman who had introduced me to the scene, engaged in conversation with one of the party whom we saw on our entering. It was a Mr. P. of Barnstaple, who, with the sisters of his late amiable wife, had retired for a change of scene to this place, from the bitter recollection of a loss, for which society for a time has no charm, nor reason any offering but ineffectual consolation: while silently sympathizing with Mr. P. the moon, just risen, shone through the fine trees near the church, rendered more luminous by the contrast of their deep foliage and dark limbs, and diffusing a mellow light around, discovered, reclining on a bank, in a pensive attitude, the sisters of Mr. P. The gentlemen, both in black, were walking with visible emotion at a short distance, but the deep sighs of Mr P. which, with the distant murmuring of the rivers, broke the profound silence of this affecting scene, induced me to quit a place so sacred to grief, and in which, under such circumstances, I considered my self as an intruder. Descending to the village, I left for the present this ever to be remembered spot:

*Tis night,
I mourn; but, ye woodlands. I mourn not for you,
For morn is approaching your charms to restore,
Perfum'd with fresh fragrance, and glittering with dew.
Nor yet for the ravage of winter I mourn,
Kind nature the embryo blossom will save.
But when shall spring visit the mouldering urn?
O when shall it dawn on the night of the grave?*



Plate 11 – Dewerstone Rocks.

The Valley of Stones, about half a mile to the north-west of Lynton, occupied my pencil the ensuing morning. It brought to my recollection many similar scenes on the borders of Dartmoor, and particularly the Valley of Rocks called Dewerston, in the parish of Shaugh, near Plymouth. Those immense masses of granite rock rise several hundred feet perpendicular from the bed of the river, tinted with a variety of mosses and lichens, while the Cad rushes over

rocks, and forming a succession of beautiful falls, unites with the Mew; at their junction the Plym takes its name, which, after passing through bridges of unrivalled picturesque appearance, and valleys rich with woods, flows under its fourth and last bridge, and mingles with the sea below Saltram.

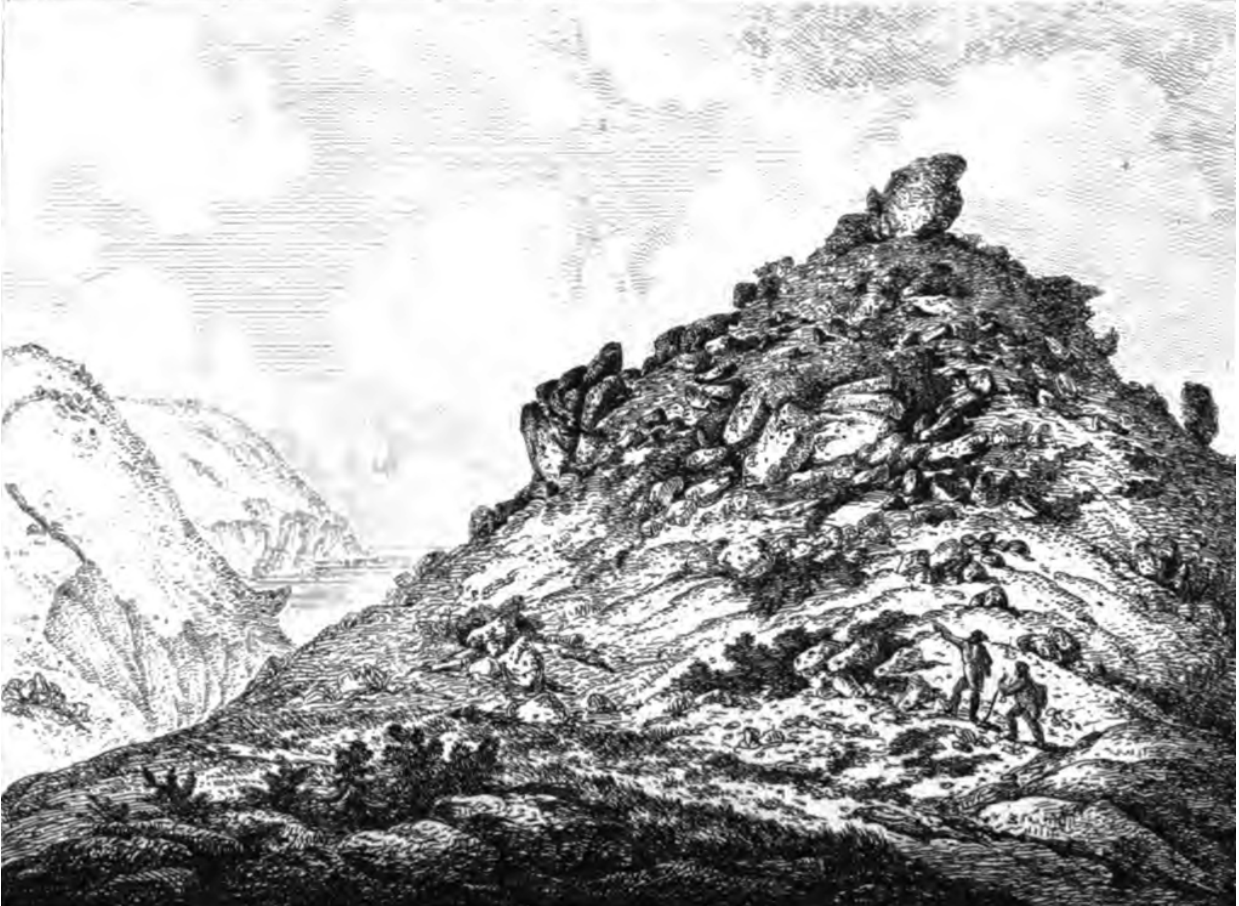


Plate 12 – Valley of Stones.

On entering the Valley of Stones the eye is offended by a quadrangular wall built with the small stones which lie scattered about; having been lately erected, not a single blade of grass rises on it, to break its natural deformity and relieve the sight from so

disgusting an object. The entrance of the valley is very narrow, its sides incline about an angle of forty-five degrees with the horizon, and are covered with rocks increasing in magnitude to the summit, where they lie in the most extraordinary confusion, and apparent insecurity, almost requiring a similar precaution as in those awful passes of the Alps, where the guides impose silence on those whom they conduct, lest the vibration of their voices should shake from their fragile foundation the impending avalanches, and crush beneath their enormous weight the unfortunate and ill-fated travellers. The valley expands near the lower end; and a conoidal hill covered with rocks rises with great dignity from the plain, forming the most striking feature of the place. The rugged coast washed by the Severn, is seen on the left retiring in perspective, and on the right the same expanse of water, bounded in the distance by the faint and imperfect coast of Wales. Several vessels were stretching up the channel, their sails reflecting a brilliant light, and from their singular contrast, pleasingly diversifying the scene of rocks before me.

The works of man, from our easily understanding them, are surveyed after the contemplation of the striking scenery of nature with much self-satisfaction; acquainted with the secret springs, by which our effects are produced, we have no motive for wonder; but nature rejects our inquiries, and demands our admiration and astonishment, overwhelming us by the immensity of her works, and sinking us, dejected and depressed, into insignificance. The sight of those vessels produced for a moment a temporary gleam of vanity, considering them as examples of the perfection of art, and the greatest pride of human ingenuity, which, though miserably perverted from their original purpose, by a species of traffick,

disgraceful to us as men, and directly militating against the fundamental principles of the Christian religion, so comprehensive and benevolent in its practice, but which we in the face of Heaven, unblushingly dare to violate; yet these vessels convey to remote nations the useful inventions of Europe, and by an interchange of commodities, diffuse the productions of each country, and cement mankind by their mutual necessities.

The north side of this mount beetles over the waters of the Bristol Channel, but a precipice of several hundred feet, to be approached by a slippery descent, rendered it highly dangerous to go further than the spot from which one of the vignettes was taken. This view has more grandeur than its other sides. The part of the valley opposite this prodigious mount, is nearly perpendicular, and huge rocks overhang the summit; but it is difficult to say which part has the most interest; new combinations of rocks are, presented at every glance, and the admiration is satiated with variety. The picturesque fern spreads luxuriantly over the valley, and increases the wildness of the view.



Plate 13 – The Conoidal Hill.

The extent of this assemblage of rocks, from the entrance to the conoidal hill at the end, is about a quarter of a mile. I had not an opportunity of observing the effect this interesting place disclosed from the sea, but imagine, from the high appearance of the adjacent coast, little was visible that could interest, or repay the time necessary for such an undertaking. The rocks composing the valley are of the same kind as what is provincially distinguished by the name of moorstone^{*}, and have in colour much the effect of grey granite. †The granitic rocks form but a small part of the external soil of the county, compared to the other; and are principally confined to the middle of Dartmoor, from whence they stretch into Cornwall, as may be seen in Dr. Maton's very interesting mineralogical map of the different soils of the western counties.

** Sandstones (moorstone); small grains of sand consisting of quartz, flint, hornblende, siliceous schist, or feldspar, and sometimes of mica cemented together, are denominated sandstones; they feel rough and sandy, the cement or basis by which the grains of sand are united to each other, is of four kinds; namely, lime, alumine, silica, and iron. Sandstones are divided into four species: the calcareous, siliceous, ferrugineous, and aluminous; of the latter are formed mill-stones, filtering-stones, and coarse whet-stones.*

† Granite, in the new mineralogy, is classed in the aggregates of crystals, and, with all the minerals

belonging to that section, consists of crystals of different sizes, or of crystals and amorphous stones cemented together. An aggregate of felspar, quartz, and mica, whatever be the size, or, the figure of the ingredients, is denominated granite and it may be divided into two species, namely, common granite; and schistose granite or gneiss. Common granite in its structure is always granular, and schistose granite is always slaty, this constituting the specific distinction. Beside these, there are several varieties arising from the mixture of other minerals, with the principal constituent part, and which are accurately defined by Kirwan, under the several names of granatine, when one of the three parts is occupied by schorl, garnet, hornblende, steatites, &c.; granitell, when two of the original parts are wanting, and one is supplied from the above substances; and granalite, when it is increased by the addition of a fourth part, either steatites, hornblende, schorl, or garnet. Dr. Darwin considers granite, and all aggregates, to be a species of lava; when the composition is of a regular angular form, it is called basaltes, and when less perfect and distinct it is called by either of the names mentioned above.

Necessary as these specific distinctions are to the mineralogist, they are unimportant to the artist, who considers nature in the whole, after an attentive and diligent observation of the general form of the parts: by him the minutiae of detail are rejected, and his whole mind

is employed to transfuse the spirit of nature into his works; he avoids the mechanical operation of indiscriminate copying, selects the poetical or refined parts and shews the difference between genius and imitation.



Plate 14 – Druids.

To the admirer of druidism, the Valley of Stones must present a high gratification, when considered as the scene of the ancient rites, the secret superstitions and barbarous immolations of that remarkable order. The retired situation, the awful appearance of impending rocks, and the wild romantic character of the place, peculiarly mark it, as a spot devoted to their sanguinary religion. With a mental blindness, but too common in every state of society, the beneficence of Providence, observable in the phenomena of nature, produced no effect in ameliorating their savage passions; and the most perfect of the works of God was sacrificed, and considered as the most acceptable offering and grateful tribute to its Creator: the most retired scenery chosen for their pollutions, and places the most peaceful converted into a Gehannum by these children of Moloch.

It was either here, or in some part of Dartmoor, that an antiquarian writer of celebrity breaks out in raptures: "Here could I sit and call up the shades of the druids." To bring forth, by the power of the imagination, the remembrance of the figure and actions of men who have been remarkable for their virtues and imitable qualities, is an illusion innocent and gratifying to our feelings; but, to call up beings who formed a despotic religious power, and whose altar streamed with the abundant blood of numerous victims, can awaken none but painful associations, nor serve any other purpose than to remind us of the ignorant and barbarity of our ancestors. Covered as these hills are with massy rocks, the effect of some terrible convulsion of nature, it might be expected that many should take an artificial form; and this has probably occasioned the various speculations of

antiquaries, and their decisively referring to the druids those appearances, which might only arise from an accident of nature.

The road from Lynton to Lynmouth is steep and slippery; but on reaching the latter place, such a succession of picturesque objects crowd on the attention, that its difficult declivity is forgotten, and nature and astonishment succeed the fatigue of the descent. It is impossible to conceive any place abounding with more interesting objects, for a painter of close scenery, than what is contained in this little vale; no discordant part appears, but every thing is in harmony and admirable coincidence. The transparent water rushes over a bed of broken granite or sand-stone, variously coloured; yellow, brown, and grey prevail; and give that peculiar richness which forms the characteristic of our rivulets. The various cottages are beautifully surrounded by woods, and the situation of some between the two coombs, is such as the most romantic imagination could desire.



Plate 15 – Lynton Church from Lynmouth.

On crossing the bridge at the foot of the great hill, a grand whole is seen of Lynton church, with a fine coomb on its left, and several interesting objects; other grand views present themselves below, near the lime-kiln, and from the quay. The steep road seen from the churchyard was now to be ascended, and compared to this, the other hills on the Devon roads become unimportant and trifling. The steep descent to the water on the left is protected only by an earth wall about a foot high, and its awful steepness must be alarming to the generality of travellers; but except on horseback, there cannot be any danger; the pedestrian has little to fear, and by avoiding the steep

appearance of the cliffs, and keeping on the opposite side of the road, any giddiness may be prevented. From the road winding round the hills, the view of Lynmouth is excluded, but on gaining the summit, the general view of the coast is exceedingly bold. Lynton is seen, and the entrance to Lynmouth; the relative situation of each place becomes distinct, and a comparison may be formed of their various heights. The slight outline taken from the road is correct, and a reference to the plate will convey a general idea of the prospect, which is given more as a plan, than as any thing picturesque. The coomb is continued on the right, the water from which passes under the largest bridge, with its banks exceedingly steep, and richly clothed with wood.



Plate 16 View from the Road near Contisberry Church of
Lynton and Lynmouth.



Plate 17 – View of Lynton Church, and the general appearance of the coast from the road winding over the hill above. The sloop or barge mark the entrance to Lynmouth.

Contisberry church is about one mile from Lynmouth, at the end of the steep hill; the ground behind it being a gentle swell, shuts out the northern prospect, and the country in view to the south is an extensive tract of downs, intersected to the horizon with deep hollows or coombs, some well wooded, and others with only a thin

vegetation; a few cottages or farms are in the distance, but generally it appears as a place of extensive pasturage, as few or no inclosures are to be seen. This is the last religious edifice on the Devon coast, the division of the counties being about four or five miles further on, when Somersetshire begins.

It was near this place, some regraters were passing with several horses laden with the whortle-berry (*vaccinium myrtillis*), to supply the markets of Barnstaple, and the other principal towns, with this produce of the coombs. It is the employment of the women and children from Porlock, Culbone, and the various cottages scattered about, to collect from the steep sides of the valleys, this favourite berry; each little stock is purchased by this necessary set of people; and what before was individually trifling, becomes collectively, sufficient to require several horses to carry their respective stocks.

"Ah! little think the gay licentious proud," how infinite are the ramifications of industry, and by what incessant diligence the lower classes of society collect a subsistence, scanty and indifferent, and apparently inadequate to the purpose of renovating their exhausted bodies, and fitting them for succeeding daily labour: yet amidst this their contentment is equable, and their health in consequence good; their constant diligence and cheerful character claim the respect and attention of the higher classes, as "All are but parts of one stupendous whole."

The important labours of agriculture, and the variety of less important callings, require a certain class of people for their execution; the more fortunate, who are elevated by affluence, enjoy by compensation the fruits of their labour; and though the difference

of education and manners necessarily prevent much intercourse, yet they should never be remembered but with kindness, nor visited but to impart the means of increasing their frugal enjoyments. On these downs numerous flocks of sheep find an excellent pasturage, and a hardy and useful race of small horses is bred, called Exmoor ponies; for the latter there is an annual sale, at Simmond's Gate, some time in August. The sport of hunting is no where pursued with more ardour than on the downs, and the flavour of the venison is highly esteemed by epicures.

The coast exhibits the same aspect and the same character as the other parts, and is on the same grand scale; with high beetling cliffs and deep caverns overhung with furze and heath, while other parts are covered with coppice-wood: a small scathed trunk of an oak is occasionally seen, but forest-wood is not abundant in this part of: the Devon coast; from having been planted in greater numbers, or in a better soil, it grows luxuriantly about Culbone and Porlock in Somersetshire.

Culbone church is a few miles on the coast of Somerset: a view of it is given, both for its singularity and proximity to Devon. It is the provincial custom of the inhabitants of this county to call a number of houses situated near a village church, Church Town; this appellation applied to Culbone appears ludicrous as only three cottages are near it, and those of the smallest kind; the church has neither a porch nor a tower, and about fourteen or twenty persons constitute its congregation; the minister from Porlock officiates once every Sunday in the summer, and every other Sunday in winter. Church Town, as it would be called, is situated in the bottom of one

of the deepest coombs on the whole coast; it has a narrow opening towards the Severn; and the access to it is by two roads, one from the downs, and the other from Porlock: the first is a tedious, narrow, zig-zag road about two miles in descent; the other has been much improved, and is conveniently broad. Wood of great luxuriance, particularly the oak and ash, grow in the valley, and the high grounds which nearly surround it, are enriched with full-grown coppice to the summit.



Plate 18. Valley of Culbone.

On the side of the hill from Porlock the view was taken; the church is distinguished by the roof being slated, whilst the tops of the cottages

are thatched; this part commands the best view, and the appearance of the brown or green plot which forms the churchyard is particularly gratifying to the sight by its pleasing smoothness. Part of a Roman cross remains before the door. The church is the picture of seclusion and quiet, and appears on the first view as a place admirably adapted for religious worship, to receive the fervent throbbings of man crying for mercy to his Creator: the impressive grandeur of the surrounding hills, by a natural transition, raises the mind to the Power that produced them; and our admiration and reverence are followed by the most animating views of the intentions of Providence, from the analogy of the adaptation in every part of the creation of the means to some wise end. But it is rather too poetical a situation for the general mixture of a common congregation; besides, men who are wearied with the toils of the week, require, on the seventh day, some repose; and to those who live on the heights or downs, the descent to Culbone is far from a relaxation of labour; the fatigue of the body will abate the pious fervour of the mind, and a state of lukewarm devotion must in consequence too often prevail. Had Cowper visited Culbone, he would not have exclaimed:

"O for a lodge in some vast wilderness
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression might never reach
My ear."

He might here have found a solitude independent of a desert, and an uninterrupted retirement for serious contemplation; in an infinite

number of other places, which might be made as free from interruption and the discord of mankind, and as impenetrable as a lodge in some vast wilderness. With a small income like the Man of Ross, the man of real humanity who wishes for seclusion, might find in such a place as Culbone a still retreat, where no rumour of oppression, which he could not redress, would reach his ear; nor no patient suffering of poverty present itself, which he could not relieve; the cabals and dissensions of extensive society he might never hear; and his happiness would be more exquisite than where he had no field for active charity, and his conscience undisturbed by regret; for having neglected the industrious part of society because there might be folly and depravity in greatness.

Having at a former period visited the principal places below Lynton to the west, and the weather beginning to change, I returned to Barnstaple. Amongst these places Clovelly and Ilfracombe deserve particular attention. The former is striking from its romantic situation. It is built on the steepest part of the coasts which rises to a considerable height; and each cottage above the line of houses on the quay is embowered with wood, which also crowns the summit of this part of the coast, beautifully varied by its gentle swellings. The pier, which has been lately erected or improved, is of considerable importance to the small shipping which are employed in the trade of the Channel; its sudden storms and dangerous navigation frequently obliging them to retreat for shelter to it, where, while they ride in safety, the agitated sea breaks against the firm wall, and throws, in a most picturesque manner, its white spray over the inclosed shipping. From the end of the pier the best view is seen; unparalleled in the county for its beauty. To the west of Clovelly is the seat of Sir J.

Hamlyn, called Clovelly Court, lately ornamented with a beautiful Gothic front, and considerable internal improvements; the rides over the grounds are pleasant and varied; the scenery of the coast is formed principally of bold projections of fine schistose rock, and overhanging brushwood, which is continued to Hartland Point, the Promontorium Herculis of old authors and the western boundary of the county. Ilfracombe is also highly attracting; the town itself is irregular and about a mile in length; but the entrance by sea, under high cliffs, and the fine eminence on which is a light-house, with the view of the lower part of the town, is amongst the most interesting scenery on the whole coast. A commodious packet sails twice a week for Swansea, which renders it a place of busy communication, and an excise cutter is stationed to look after the smugglers.

Coomb Martin is about five miles from Ilfracombe, towards Lynton; and is remarkable for its ancient mines of silver, or rather for the quantity of that metal obtained by working the veins of galena, or lead ore, which abound in the adjoining hills. Sir Beavis Bulmer gave "a rich and fayer cupp to the right honourable William Earl of Bath," of the silver from this place, and a similar present to the "Honourable Sir R. Martyn, Knight, Lord Mayor of the citie of London, to contynue to the said citie for ever." On the last were these lines:

"When water works in broaken wharfe
At first erected weare.
And Beavis Bulmer with his art

The waters 'gan to reare.
Dispersed I in earth dyd lie
Since all beginnings old.
In place call'd Comb, wher Martin longe
Had hydd me in his molde.
I did no service on the earth.
Nor no man set me free.
Till Bulmer by his skill and change
Did frame me this to be."

"Anno nostrae Redemptionis 1593,
Reginae Virginis 35,
Richardo Martino militi, iterum majori sive vice secunda
civitatis London."

The intermediate coast from Ilfracombe to Lynton I had no opportunity of seeing; but from those who are acquainted with it, learn, that it is more romantic than any other part. The manners of the peasantry resemble those of the interior of Wales: — an openness and easy familiarity without blunt rusticity or tiresome inquisitiveness, form the distinguishing characteristic between them and the southern countymen. Communication with them is thus rendered pleasing, and the pedestrian is delightfully reconciled to his situation — reposing in the confidence inspired by their character, he

forgets he is a stranger and enjoys in a great degree that familiar and friendly intercourse which constitutes the principal difference between home and abroad. This occasions no small solace to the feelings of the solitary traveller, who frequently taking a retrospective view of his connexions, and comparing them with his present insulated situation, regrets the absence of those confidential countenances he has been accustomed to behold, and, not having the reality, deems himself fortunate in meeting with such happy substitutes.

The inhabitants of Dartmoor and its confines exhibit a very different portrait: their minds appear to be coloured by the country they inhabit, which is dreary in the extreme; — the hills in it are not on a grand scale, and its scattered rocks, though individually interesting, present nothing of consequence as a whole. The valleys are generally swampy, with very formidable bogs. The patches of cultivated ground have been rescued from the waste, by the exertion of no common industry; as it required not draining alone, but also a plain of rocks to be removed: — walls were indeed readily formed, and they are not the least curious part of the moor, as the stones which form the inclosures frequently weigh several tons. Scarce. a shrub. makes its appearance on this desolate region; but there can be no doubt of its having been, at some former period well wooded, as it is still called the Forest. In the winter, the moor is covered with snow; and in the warmer months, it has even been some feet deep: — this, with the swampy state of the vallies, must of course prevent the few families that inhabit it, from all but the most necessary intercourse: From the distance of the market towns, seldom more than a weekly journey is undertaken, and many carry the produce of a small farm to

Plymouth (at least thirty miles); where, from their peculiar manners and habit, they are known by the name of "Moormen": some of them possess a degree of roughness quite terrifying, and the epithet "dulcet" cannot always be with propriety applied to the voice of a Dartmoor female. But in general they are an honest, inoffensive set of people, although they appear to strangers, from their unconquerable shyness, sullen and discourteous.

After a careful retrospect of the scenery which the northern coast displays, it will not require much hesitation to affirm, that it is by far the most magnificent and picturesque of which Devon can boast. Its great variety of interesting objects are marked with a peculiar character, which discriminates them from those of the southern and eastern. Here the magnitude of the objects occasions the strongest contrast; stupendous hills rising one thousand feet from their base are not frequently to be paralleled on the opposite side. But it is not greatness alone that constitutes their superiority; variety spreads her charms with the most enchanting profusion; the coombs or narrow valleys, sheltered by luxuriant woods, which spreading their fertile branches over the various masses of rock, and protruding in the most fanciful shapes, form a most gratifying picture not to be contemplated without admiration. These coombs break the outline of the coasts from Illfracombe to Culbone in Somersetshire.

Of views of cultivated scenery, the appearance of Tawstock from Tawton bridge is almost unrivalled; such an assemblage of interesting objects so happily grouped together is seldom seen, and no prospect in any part of England can be superior. Castle Hill, the seat of the right honourable Earl Fortescue, possesses many charms;

and the country around Torrington, and Biddeford, of the tranquil character, is eminently interesting. The admirer of cultivated nature will be richly repaid in exploring the interior of the north of Devon, whilst the coast from Hartland Point to Culbone affords some of the grandest displays of her rude and uncultivated beauties: however, as every human enjoyment is counterbalanced by some ill, this exquisite variety of prospect is only accessible by the worst roads in the kingdom.

End of the excursion to the north of Devon.

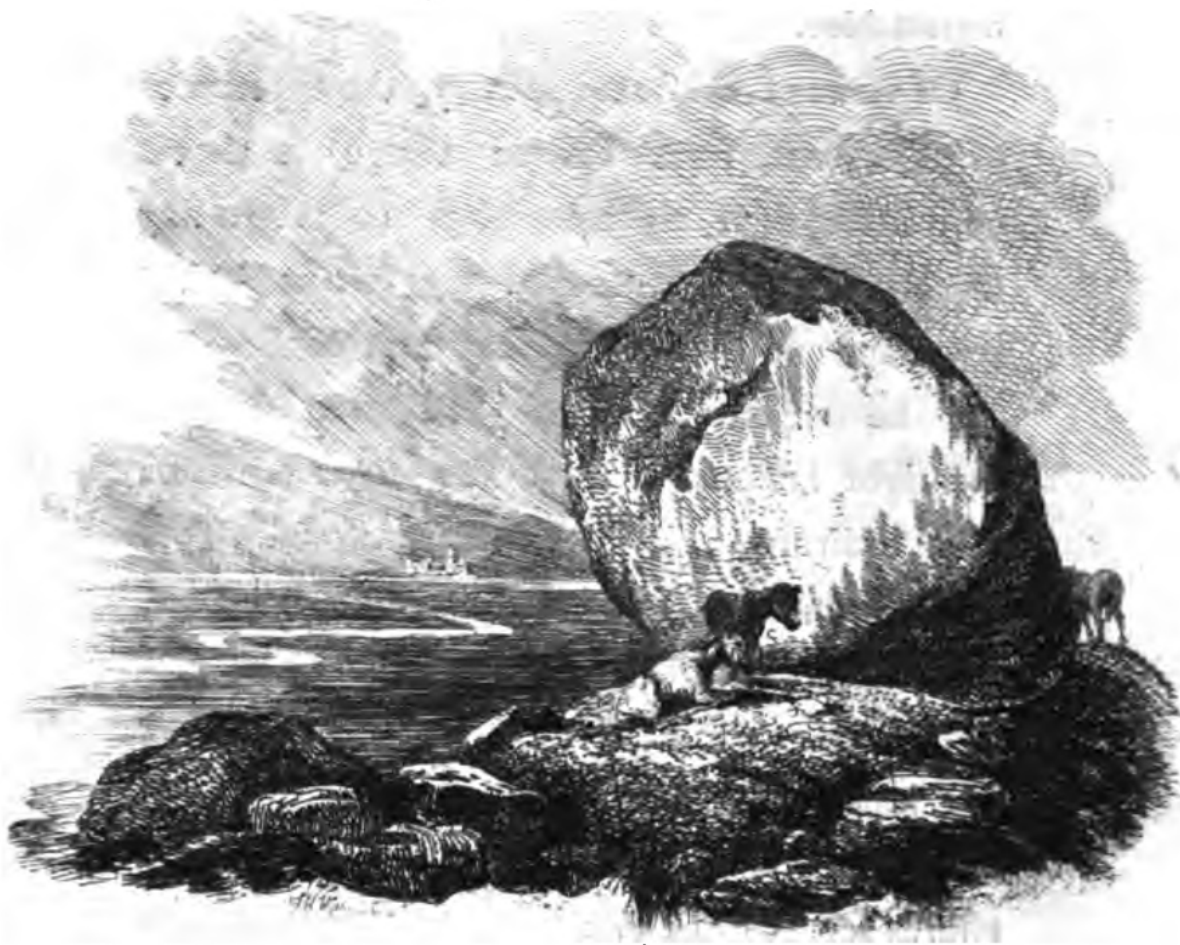


Plate 19 – Endpiece to Tour to the North.



Picturesque Excursions
in
Dorsetshire
by

T.H. Williams & H.J. Johns.



Second Excursion to the South of Devon.

The pleasant village of Tamerton is about five miles from Plymouth, and is accessible by water, from a beautiful inlet of the Tamer, which has been already described: it is nearly surrounded by high cultivated ground, and is well wooded. The church, which is a well-built, unornamented edifice, is embosomed in fine trees, one of which is a large ash, presenting a striking and rare combination of elegance and grandeur. The tower of the church is beautifully tinted with a profusion of lichens and mosses. The seclusion of the churchyard, produces the effect of concentrating the attention on the mementos of the departed; a train of interesting reflections arise which are more powerfully felt than in places where the vanity of pomp, and the falsehood of inscriptions, excite no sympathy. The admired Elegy of Gray is accommodated to every village, and the nature of its sentiments vibrates to the corresponding feelings of every bosom.



Plate 21 – Tamerton Foliot.

The remains of an old tree, called Copplestone's oak, are at the east end of the churchyard; and the tradition of the parish notices a remarkable and affecting incident, which is partly corroborated by Prince.

"There fell out a most unfortunate occurrence in this place, Tamerton; which in all probability hastened the extinction of the name here, and at Copplestone also. The history whereof (although I take no delight in reviewing the infirmities of men, now well nigh buried in oblivion), yet out of charity it may be worth the relating, to stand as a landmark to posterity, that all may beware how they give

themselves up to the transports of bloody malice and revenge, which in the end will hurry them into the bottomless gulf of woe and misery.

Esquire Copplestone, of Warley (I cannot recover his Christian name, although I suppose it was John) in the days of Queen Elizabeth had a young man to his godson that had been abroad for education: who at his return home, hearing of the extravagances of his godfather's conversation, expressed in some company his sorrowful resentment of it, which was not done so privately, but the report thereof was soon brought (as there be tale-bearers enough every where) to his godfather's ears. This exceedingly enkindled the indignation of the old gentleman against his godson, and (as it was supposed) his natural son also, making him break out, saying, 'Must boys observe, and descant on the actions of men, and their betters?' From henceforth he resolved, and sought all opportunities to be revenged upon him; at length, they both met at Tamerton, their parish church, on a Lord's day. The young man observing by his countenance, what he was partly informed of before, that his godfather was highly displeased at him, prudently withdrew betimes from the church, and resolved to keep himself out of his reach until his indignation should be overpassed: The old gentleman, seeing his revenge likely to be disappointed; sent the young man word, that his anger towards him was now over, and he might return to his church again; accordingly the young man came at the usual time, but cautiously eyeing his godfather, he found the expression of the poet too true, 'Manet alta mente repostam' that his displeasure was not laid aside, but laid up in a deep revengeful mind: whereupon as soon as the duties of religion were over, he again hastened out of the

church, as soon as he could; upon this his godfather followed him, but not being able to overtake him, he threw his dagger after him (the wearing whereof was the mode of those times), and struck him through the veins of the back, so that he fell and died on the spot.

Upon this Mr. Copplestone fled, but his friends improved all the interest they had at court, to procure a pardon, which at length, at the cost of about thirteen manors of land, in the county of Cornwall, they with difficulty obtained. However this gentleman escaped the penalty due to so vile a crime, from the laws of man; he did not, it seems, escape the revengeful hand of Providence, which was pleased, either in his sons or grandsons days, to blot his name quite out of that place; and at his other place to leave nothing remaining but the name. For this estate came to two daughters and heirs: the eldest was married to Mr. Elford, Esquire; and the youngest unto Sir John Bampffield, of Poltimore, Bart. *

* *Prince, Danmonii Orientales Illustres, page 172.*

The eldest sister had Coplesten House, and demesnes; the youngest had Warleigh.

The cottage scene, described near the conclusion of the first Excursion, is about one mile from Tamerton: the road from St. Bude to this place is through it, and rises by a gentle ascent for about half a mile, where the prospect from the top has all the variety of a Devon view. The landscape is composed of the woods of Woodland and

Budshed, the beautiful sylvan cottage scene, and various interesting objects on the high grounds; Budshed House, the mill beyond it, the lake like a mill-pond, reflecting a fine hanging wood; and on the opposite side of the creek the woods of Warleigh, with the majestic torr already described, present themselves to the delighted sight, as the next in succession of this natural panorama: at the base of the torr the waters of the Tamar placidly glide along, conveying the barges laden with limestone for the purposes of agriculture, to a small quay. A cottage and a limekiln are near the quay, being fortunately placed where the greatest effect arises from their contrast in colour and form, with the other parts of the picture.

Tamerton is seen further to the right, and the circle is filled by the distant blue hills of Dartmoor, and in the near ground, the improved appearance of Whitleigh (the seat of Mr. Gennys), adjoining to Woodland and Budshed. The opening of the Tamar between Warleigh and Budshed increases the interest of the view from this spot in an incalculable degree by allowing, what is absolutely necessary in every fine landscape, the eye to range over a small piece of distance, bounded only by the horizon. This is the Cornish shore on the opposite side of the river, which, from its peculiar beauty, the effect of a great variety* of objects made picturesque by distance, finishes a scene to be classed with the finest in the county.

**Objects in the distances of landscapes being indistinctly men, the imagination has a power without limitation of making out the connexion of the parts, and of gratifying its conjectures to infinity. This is a great cause of pleasure in*

fine paintings; those who examine the works of Claude Lorrain will find an exemplification of this position, and will observe the care with which he avoided crowding his fore-grounds, as a multiplicity of objects in that part necessarily distracts the attention. A temple in ruins, a few trees and figures, generally in shade, were the principal subjects; but in his distances he gave the richest and most varied scenery Italy could produce or his own classic fancy imagine; all the luxuriance of cultivation and the sublimity of Alpine mountains.

Warleigh, a beautiful situation, nearly surrounded by the Tamer, and well covered with wood, is at present the property of the Radcliffes: the antiquity of it is recorded by Prince, in his "Worthies of Devon." Gilbert Foliot, Lord Bishop of London, is reckoned by Dr. Fuller among the natives of this county; and most likely he was born At Tamerton-foliot, a town or dwelling house by the Tamer side (belonging to Foliot), about five miles to the north of Plymouth. These were the lands of Sampson Foliot in King Stephen's time; whose reign began 1136, who had his principal residence at Warleigh in that parish, a seat both pleasant and profitable; for standing near the Tamer side, and having a park and fair demesnes belonging to it, it wants no variety which sea or land can afford. A daughter and heir of this family of Foliot or Folioth, as it was sometimes called, brought these possessions at length unto her husband. Sir Ralph de Georges, Knight, in whose name and posterity they flourished for about six descents following, and then the heir of that name brought them in like manner to the noble family of Bonville, of Shute, in the

eastern parts of this county; by whose heir, they descended to Coplestone, and by one of the co-heirs of that name, they came to the honourable family of Bamfylde of Poltimore; and Sir Copleston Warwick Bamfylde, Baronet, a minor of about eight years of age, is now lord thereof."

Marystow, the beautiful seat of Manasseh Lopez, Esquire, who purchased it, together with a very extensive domain, of the executors of the late Mr. Heywood, is three miles from Tamerton, and nine miles from Plymouth by Roborough-down. It is situated at a small distance from the Tavey, which flows at the bottom of the lawn, and about two miles from the junction of that river with the Tamer, which is seen from the house. It is, like Tamerton, to be approached at a proper time of the tide. Mr. Lopez has lately added to the ruins of a limekiln, a very neat pavilion, for the reception of the numerous water-parties, who are attracted by the various beauties of this enchanting place. The house is large, and has a very handsome chapel attached to it, where divine service is performed every Sunday when the family is there. The house, which was irregular before, has lately been much improved by the proprietor, with the addition of a corresponding wing, and a handsome portico of the Ionic order. The colour lately given to it is also a great improvement; it is chaste and pleasing.

A steep woody hill ascends from the bed of the river opposite to the house from which it forms a fine object. The ground behind the house rises with a gradual swells and is richly covered with a variety of fine trees, some truly venerable, sporting their light grey moss-covered limbs in a deep ground of green and affording in the general

effect a delightful contrast. Numerous shaded walks are conducted through the rich variety of wood; and from the contrast of land and river scenery, a novelty the most pleasing arises, and the dull monotony of such places in general is never felt here.

The walk under the trees is continued after crossing a small dale through another wood of forest timber and full-grown coppice; planted on the steep ground which forms on the approach by water to this place, the right bank of the Tavey: on its entrance it branches off into three paths judiciously conducted to such places that some new and interesting prospect is disclosed; at the end of a mile they converge near a small temple, where while rest is afforded by its seat, the eye is gratified by one of the best views from it of Maristow House.

The approach by water is much admired, but by the carriage road over Roborough-down it is more wild and interesting; this particularly being in the descent after passing the second lodge: the hills rise to a considerable height, full of coppice wood, and the valleys abound in oaks; the romantic little village of Milton is on the right, and in front the devious Tavey is just visible through an opening of the Milton valley, and in the distance are enclosures, interspersed with farms and cottages surrounded by the blue torrs of Dartmoor.

The effect is considerably increased by transition from alternate cultivation and wildness to the peculiar gardening of a gentleman's grounds; this contrast is so pleasing, that in few places can the charms of variety be more fully experienced; the most fastidious cannot but be highly gratified; for all the interesting objects of

nature, without the fatigue of exploring, present themselves from the various walks to his observation. From this part the house is completely excluded by the height of the hills on the right, and the fine avenue at the entrance: on leaving the latter, it is seen at a very short distance, its fine lawn stretching out to the margin of the river, with an expanse of water formed from the junction of the Tavey with the Tamer; behind it, the Cornish hills in the distance are lost in a beautiful perspective: the high woody hill in front of the house on the opposite side of the Tavey, already mentioned, gradually slopes to the west; but it continues its height, for a considerable way up the river, occasionally affording fine projections of rock.

The next interesting feature of the Tavey is a scene above Maristow, known by the name of Lophill; it is composed of a fine limekiln, which as well here as on the Tamer, has a greater length, and more picturesque appearance, than those on the other rivers; a large farmhouse, surrounded with woods and many other objects, which may be conceived near such a moving scene as the neighbourhood of a limekiln, affords on the banks of a navigable river. A fine wood proudly overhangs the whole view on the right; and the timber-wains which are frequently seen emerging from it, while they add to the general effect by their uncommon picturesque appearance, awaken a painful regret for their necessity. The distant torrs of Dartmoor, as in most views to the north and east, close the prospect, reflecting at times their craggy tops, or enveloped in shadow, and consequent indistinctness, giving an impressive effect to the whole picture.

The river above Lophill contracts its banks, at which place its navigable character ceases; and until lately the valley through which

it flows abounded with the finest wood in the county; but some thousands of trees having been felled, and not replaced by new plantations, its beauty is considerably diminished, and the lover of nature is left to regret the indiscriminate destruction of the richest feature in a fine landscape. The course of the river is devious, either flowing through rich meadows, or winding round some sudden projection, breaking its water over large masses of rock, or in other places apparently at rest, in pools of an ebon blackness. About two miles on the river from Maristow is a salmon wier, overhung with trees; a scene of uncommon beauty and poetic interest, which is increased by the general woody character which the country now assumes.

On the high ground above the river, on the right, is Place or Buckland Abbey, the property, and occasional residence, of Lord Heathfield. It originally belonged to a monastery of Cistercians, founded in 1278, by Amicia, wife of Baldwin de Rivers, Earl of Devon, and daughter of Gilbert de Clare; at the dissolution its yearly revenues were valued, according to Dugdale, at £241. 17s. 9d. and the site was afterwards granted to Richard Greynfield. Of the succeeding possessors, probably little is known, until it became the property of the famous Sir Francis Drake, whose birthplace is said to be in the neighbourhood, but the exact spot does not appear to be known. The building generally presents a monastic appearance; and the extensive offices and large kitchen suggest the probability of some relaxation of devotion by the very agreeable variety of good living. The principal residence of Lord Heathfield being at Nutwell, on the river Exe, this place is but occasionally visited; yet it is by no means neglected, as several very considerable alterations have been lately made,

particularly by a new Gothic window to the hall, and a variety of lesser improvements. A portrait of Sir F. Drake is preserved in the house, and a framed copy of his patent of arms from Queen Elizabeth, dated 1531; also a full-length picture of the hero, and the identical sword and drum which he took with him in his voyage round the world.

Buckland Monachorum, in which is the church of the abbey, is about one mile from Place: vestiges of its antiquity appear in most of the houses, which have pointed arched doors and windows. The church is a very handsome building and consists of a nave, two side-aisles, two small transepts, and a handsome tower, with octagon turrets and pinnacles. It contains several monuments; but those of Lord Heathfield, and the late Sir F. Drake, who lie interred in the church, particularly claim attention: these are executed by the ingenious Bacon. The first, the celebrated defender of Gibraltar, is represented in a profile medallion, and below is Britannia, as large as life, holding a model of the gate of a fortress, inscribed *Plus ultra*; on her right is a boy with a key in one hand, and a branch of palm in the other. The monument is finely executed; the figure of Britannia is peculiarly graceful; but the best-natured critic must regret, that the face of the boy is deficient in expression: the four bass-relievos below, illustrative of the principal events of the siege, are well finished. On the pedestal is an inscription, recording the brilliant achievements, and family, of the subject of this fine monument.

Adjoining this is a mural tablet to Sir F. Drake: the design on it is simple and unaffected; it is a pleasing figure of Truth leaning over an urn; and the inscription merely relates the humble and unambitious

services of the lineal descendant of the great navigator and warrior, which were those of the clerk-comptroller of the Board of Green Cloth, in the late and present king's reign.

The river Tavey again claims our attention; above the salmon weir, the banks increase in beauty, and rural objects become more numerous. Denham-bridge is the centre of the next striking scene; it is a simple structure of only two arches: around it, nature appears to have been unassisted by much cultivation, as the fine oaks are the spontaneous production of the soil; their huge limbs, covered with grey mosses, overhang the dark water, enjoying an uninterrupted reflection, except where the playful trout, darting above the surface, breaks the stillness, and occasions a circular undulation. A mill, at all times an object of peculiar interest in a picture, is at a small distance; the high ground behind is weft-wooded, and a silver stream glides between the trees, which, after turning the mill-wheel, makes a pleasing little fall, before it mingles with the river. A farm-house and some cottages lie in woody seclusion on the Buckland side.

On a fine evening, no scene is superior to the general effect of this: the various reflections from the water, the fall of rivulets, the busy hum of insects, the admirable adaptation of the parts to complete a whole, contribute to give it a degree of unrivalled interest. The blue curling smoke arising from the busy fires, by its silent diffusion, gives that indistinctness, which prevents the sight from being incommoded by too great a variety of objects; and recalls from the contemplation of nature, the attention to well-deserved rustic enjoyment, purchased by incessant toil in the most necessary of all labours. The important employments of agriculture, from the

mutability of mankind, had not been considered, until within these few years, but with indifference; the honours paid to it in the earlier ages were forgotten, or, if remembered, considered only as poetic fiction; and the various instances of great men returning from important public employments, to cultivate their own lands, received the contempt of the present race for such a miserable application of that time which is now so rationally enjoyed, and such weakness to pursue, in their relaxation from state affairs so ignoble an employment.

The real wealth of a state is the well-directed industry of its inhabitants. Those who walk on the summits of human life are so few, compared to the mass of population, that their splendour cannot be considered as a fair criterion of the riches of a country: it is the comfort and frugal enjoyment of a cottager, the neatness of his habitation, his well-cultivated garden, and the healthful smiles of his family; which, trifling as they may appear to the unthinking, form the real basis of wealth, the standard of opulence; and misfortune, probably distant, lurks under the fallacious appearance of any other prosperity. Can any mind receive delight from the richest assemblage of rural objects, where there is, poverty amongst the inhabitants? This association is impossible to be destroyed; at least, "far from me, and from my friends, be such frigid philosophy," that shall make us think otherwise. The common repast of the labouring families in this part of the country, is tea; it is their dinner, probably increased by a few potatoes, and at the tea-hour of the evening it is alone their supper: on a Sunday the coarsest part of animal food is their luxury, "Think of this, unfeeling Pride and silken Affluence."

Leaving this subject, which embitters every rural walk, renders as fabulous all the delightful visions of country life imbibed in youth, and reduces to fictions, extravagant as Arabian tales, the descriptions of poets, we return to the tranquil Tavey, silently flowing down the vale, reflecting the lichen-tinted schistose rocks, and the fantastic, foliage of the banks. This poetic softness is soon lost, and its rocky character is resumed. Near a copper-mine, called by the extraordinary name of the Virtuous Lady, there is a fall of the river strikingly grand, and superior to any in the vicinity: the channel is not more contracted, but a vast bed of rocks oppose its course; and rushing with its accustomed fury, when impeded, over some, and through the hollows of others, it forms an agitated basin, boiling with foam and dashing around its white spray, until at a considerable distance it returns to its original transparency, and glides complacently through the valley, without a trace of its former convulsion. How defective is the analogy of the stream of life ! How delightful it would be, if, after the terrible political conflicts in which men are constantly engaged, their return to order were unembittered by the sanguinary marks of their destructive delirium; but so extensive is the circle of its melancholy effects, so indelible is the impression in families, that in this part it bears not the smallest resemblance.

Above this fall, the river Walk, or Walkham unites its tributary waters with the Tavey, after flowing through a rich variety of scenery, which will repay the picturesque explorer with innumerable sketches. Tavistock* is three or four miles further, deriving its name from the river, and the Saxon word stock, a place; it is a town of considerable antiquity, and the birthplace of some illustrious

characters. William Browne was born here in the year 1590: he was a poet of considerable eminence in his day and his versification is remarkably smooth and flowing for the age in which he wrote. In the poem entitled *Britannia's Pastorals* he has introduced several very pretty allusions, descriptive of scenery in this neighbourhood.

**The antiquities, &c. of Tavistock will be described in the Excursion up the Tamer.*

The river Tamar, after joining the boundary of the extensive parish of Beeralston is five miles from Tavistock; and at this spot the great road into Cornwall begins, over New-bridge. Brent Torr is five miles from Tavistock: the church on the summit has given rise to various traditions, one of which has been already detailed: the prospect from it includes the British and on a dear day the Bristol Channel, the many pointed torrs of Dartmoor, the fine scenery toward Launceston Castle, and the Rough-torr hills. Two miles further, near the road, is the famous fall into the Lyd (for it is only a mountain torrent which empties itself into that river) so much the object of curiosity: a steep and long descent leads to it; and after walking by the side of the river, a kind of glen is entered, where a silver stream falls nearly seventy feet, almost perpendicular, into a small basin, and unites with the Lyd at the distance of a few yards. The fall has occasioned a degree of disappointment to many, probably from having formed too sanguine expectations of its force; for it has nothing of the character of a cataract, but it cannot be surveyed without emotions of tranquil pleasure, nor remembered but as a scene of interest and picturesque beauty. As every thing is considered by comparison, it may derive its fame from the great contrast between it and Lydford-bridge, the

Devil's-bridge of Devon, and an object of terror, from the many accidents near it, and its awful situation.



Plate 22 – Lydford Bridge.

To see this latter place, the steep side of the hill must be patiently surmounted, and the road regained; the distance to it then is about a mile; it has not any other appearance than that of a small parapet wall, erected as a protection from a ditch: but curiosity is first attracted by the noise of water; and a sudden exclamation of surprise generally follows, on looking over the wall; the thick woods on each side exclude the light, but the whiteness of the agitated water is seen at the depth of seventy or eighty feet; the foundation of the piers is perceived, and confidence of security diminishes, as the eye explores the terrifying scene. The course of the Lyd is the most extraordinary of any river in the country: while others flow through valleys, this penetrates through a kind of cleft, or extensive fissure, occasionally widening, so as to admit walking by its side, but generally so contracted as to render it impossible. In some places the river is not visible; it imperceptibly oozes through a narrow fissure without a murmur to denote its passage; the rocky sides beetle over, and in one of those places the foundation for the bridge was chosen. The height of the rocks from the river, before the mould begins, is between sixty and seventy feet, and the bridge is built on the highest part of it; on each side there is a small slope to these precipices, well planted by nature. The tops of the trees being on a level with the bridge, give the appearance, on the first view, of small brushwood hanging over a stream. The water rushes with all the noise of frequent obstructions, making two or three considerable falls after passing under the bridge. The whole channel of the river being of schistose rock, its sides exhibit in some places a series of concavities, from the constant action of the water; and pools of very considerable deepness are in its bed, of a jet black. The river itself, about a mile from the bridge,

falls over a beautiful assemblage of rocks; it is known by the name of Kate's Fall, from a poor market- woman, who, in attempting to cross the river above the fall on horseback, was unfortunately drowned, and carried by the force of the stream over the rocks, to a considerable distance: the horse having panniers, remained for some time pressed in the narrow channel.

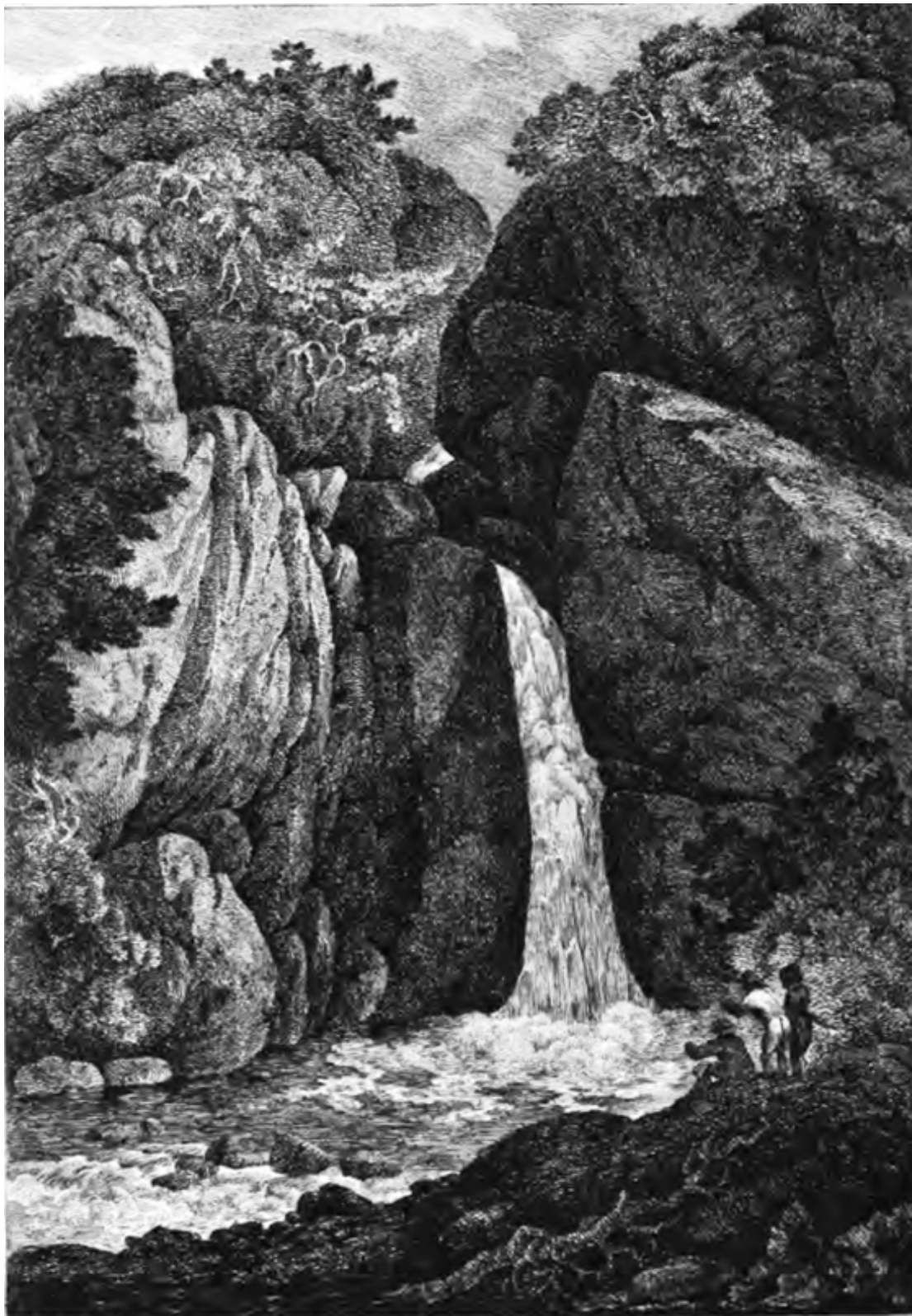


Plate 23 – Kate's Fall above Lydford Bridge

This extraordinary place has been the scene of frequent suicide: whether it arose from an expectation that the world would be deceived respecting the real cause, and attribute to accident what arose from premeditation; or, that the gloom of the mind would be increased by a situation which only awakened images of congenial horror, and strengthened the fatal intention, rather than repressed it; can only be the subject of conjecture. The most remarkable is related of a gentleman, who resided in the vicinity of Exeter: born with the expectation of a large fortune, he had the enviable prospect of enjoying the happiness of affluence: but an unfortunate propensity for play, in which he was generally the dupe of designing wretches, blasted the fair promise of fortune, and occasioned the loss of very considerable sums. To pay these he had no immediate means; and, under the impression of the false interpretation of honour, he rashly determined on self-destruction. To execute this dreadful intention he chose this scene, and riding over the moor to it, in the awful hour of midnight, he dismounted, and madly leaped headlong into the destructive chasm; a few days after his disfigured body was found among the rocks. Another instance is related of an unhappy wretch, who drowned himself in a deep pool above the bridge, which takes its name from the circumstance; and also of a poor maniac, who escaped from his keeper, and with a convulsive laugh threw himself over the rocky precipice.

A story is also related of a traveller, who being benighted on this road, and wishing to get to some place of shelter from the "pitiless pelting of the storm," spurred his nag forward with more than

common speed: in the morning he was informed that the bridge had been swept away by the current, and he shuddered to reflect on his narrow escape, his horse having cleared the chasm by a sudden leap in the middle of his course, the occasion of his making it being unknown at the time.

Lydford village is now a mean, dirty place; the square castle is not picturesque, and it has the least attracting appearance of any ever erected: Browne the poet, who was born at Tavistock, alludes to it in the following lines:

*"They have a castle on a hill;
I took it for an old windmill.
The vanes blown off by weather:
To lie therein one night its guest,
'Twere better to be ston'd and press'd.
Or hang'd — now choose you whether."*

Contemptible as it now appears, it may derive some pride from its antiquity, and the accounts handed down of its ancient opulence: it is still one of the Stannary Courts, and the castle is now repairing, probably for some useful purpose.



Plate 24 — Scene Near Lydford.

From the Domesday Book it appears that Lydford was rated in the same manner as London, and had 122 burgesses; under the plea of *propter paupertatem*, it was excused from sending any representatives to parliament, which it had been accustomed to do; and so different were the times in that respect from the present, that it was generally considered as a burden. In the dreadful irruption of the Danes in 997, this part of the country particularly suffered from their fury; desolation and massacre extended to the most sequestered places, and the ungovernable passions of these northern

freebooters experienced, for a time, no opposition nor check, but a degree of success, which fallaciously made them imagine that their designs were under the immediate guidance of Providence. To attribute to the Deity such an interference in so sanguinary a cause, is impious; but, if their ignorance be allowed as an extenuation of the crime, what excuse can we offer for nations enlightened by religion and knowledge, who frequently invoke the support of the Deity, when their intentions are in reality equally unwarrantable, iniquitous, and unjust?

This self-delusion produced its usual effects: to the unabating vigour and decision of conduct, which generally ensures victory, a languor and degree of luxurious indulgence succeeded: reposing in the confidence of good fortune, the conquerors relaxed in their warlike exertions, and were shortly after defeated by the Britons; falling a just sacrifice to the manes of those they had slaughtered. Lydford recovered from this misfortune, but afterwards rapidly lost its consequence: tradition reports, that in its fortunate days it entertained Julius Caesar, on his second arrival here; but to boast of this, must be making a virtue of necessity, as we may conceive in what manner, and how obsequiously, the favour of a conqueror must be conciliated – by the anticipation of every want, and a passive submission to every order.

The country for some distance beyond Lydford is devoid of beauty, being principally extensive downs, interspersed with small enclosures: and nothing of much interest occurs, until we reach Oakhampton. The account of this place in the second excursion was intended to be considerably enlarged. In this county, more than any

other, the lover of the picturesque will have frequent occasion for his ardour and perseverance, as its beauty consists principally in retired valleys, and situations, some of which are hardly accessible, even to the patient pedestrian.

Of this class of scenery is the vicinity of Oakhampton; in the first visit, the principle object being the northern coast, it was either not seen, or rapidly passed. The intricacy of the roads and difficulty of seeing the most beautiful scenery of the county, must operate to render it less known than many other places, whose celebrity is far-famed, but whose local beauties are inferior to ours. When the conveyance is easy, the mind is unruffled and serene, and is in a more recipient state for intellectual gratification, than where the ruggedness of the road renders walking absolutely necessary for safety, and where the fatigue of the body proportionally affects the energies of the mind. In countries where the rivers are navigable for a considerable way, such an effect has the luxury of the manner of observing the scenery from barges or boats, that even common objects give great delight, and the character of these places is generally very celebrated. The most remarkable instance of this is the river Wye in Monmouthshire, whose beauties it has been the fashion to celebrate in the most extravagant terms; as if it possessed all the concentrated advantages of every natural and artificial object. A particular consideration of this subject must be deferred to some future time; but on judging it by a picturesque scale, with the exception of four grand views, in a course of forty miles, it will be found not to possess more claim to particular interest than many other rivers.

The colour of the water, and the appearance of the mud, even so high as its most striking feature Goodrich Castle, incalculably deduct from its beauty: a great source of pleasure is entirely lost, from this cause, as there cannot be any fine reflections from the water. Notwithstanding the difficulty of viewing our prospects, the real admirer of nature will not be intimidated by petty obstructions: by leaving the common beaten road, and penetrating along the sides of the rivers and mountain rivulets, he will find rich combinations of delightful objects, which will amply repay his toils, and stimulate him to new adventures. The ruins of Oakhampton Castle are in a state of the most rapid decay. These remains are the most ancient of any in the county; but the period of their duration is nearly completed: the square keep, which is built on a natural mount or hillock, is so rent or broken, and so detached into parts, unsupported or insulated, that it appears impossible to survive the severity of many winters. The other parts of the castle are nearly in a similar state, but being less exposed than the keep are not in so much danger of falling.



Plate 25 – Oakhampton Castle.

A rich mantle of ivy gives its usual grace to the lower ruins. The fantastic foliage of ivy is generally a beautiful object amidst a dilapidated pile of buildings, particularly where it is in broad masses, which allow a breadth of light and shade, of corresponding dignity with the grandeur of castles. An extensive mass, or cluster of it, which alone might be heavy, is admirably varied and united in keeping, with whatever supports it; by the young shoots: these fix their tendrils, and spreading upwards, with a peculiar picturesque character, give a degree of unrivalled beauty to the whole building. The ornaments of nature in the decorations of ruins are so tasteful, so pleasingly wild, and so harmonized, that nothing from human ingenuity can be added for their improvement. "The long grass that o'ertops the mouldering wall &c" is an object simple and common; but where is there more effect produced than when it is agitated by the wind, and responsively vibrating to its motion?

The individual and general beauty of mosses, and the richness of lichens, contribute, by the great variety of their colour, to adorn the front of old buildings. All that remains for taste to perform, is, the removal of ivy when it shades fretted and tracery windows, arched doors, or any neat stoned-work: these are in general so few, and occupy so small a part of the walls, that, however common in point of architectural beauty they may be, yet, by their exposure, a variety arises, a break is introduced, and something like an object is added. To these productions of the vegetable world the landscape-painter is under the greatest obligation. In a picture of a castle, or of any ruin, where it might be necessary to adhere to the local scene without the introduction of any object to assist in the character of it as a picture, their judicious management will enable him to give it either the

appearance of being agitated by a storm, or a peculiar interest from the fine ivied foliage, with its clustered branches, and the delicacy of the overhanging long grass.

It would have been for the interest of the inhabitants of Oakhampton, by exerting their influence with the proprietor, to have preserved the castle from the destruction which awaits it; it would have been a constant motive for visiting their town, as places become interesting in proportion to the circumstances either of nature or art connected with them. Those whom affluence allows to be constantly making tours, must feel a diminution of pleasure, by the loss of so fine an object, so attracting a feature, the greatest curiosity in the vicinity, and which can never be replaced.

The anticipated delight of viewing the castle and the extensive park, predominates over the chilling prospect of traversing the dreary downs by which Oakhampton is alone accessible; and the imagination riots in the expectation of picturesque enjoyments. But transitory is the duration of this pleasure; the woods are daily being destroyed*; and what is a political evil, no new plantations have been formed. The inhabitants of Oakhampton who are remarkable for their hospitality, and love of social, friendly intercourse, must survey with painful sensations this rapid destruction of the fine woods, which, stretched for some miles beyond the castle, afford in the summer heats to extensive shady walk, refreshingly cool, and allow the delighted eye, from the various openings, to view the different effect of the ruins from opposite positions. Painful as this loss is, it must be consolatory to the inhabitants, that the beautiful little valleys hold out no temptation to mercenary proprietors to

deprive them of their charms. The number of pleasing falls of water over fine rocks, and the combination of hills returning in perspective, will remain untouched ; and although the loss of wood, from its tedious growth, may be said to be irreparable, yet a great degree of picturesque pleasure arises from other objects which nature has fixed beyond the interest of man to remove.

*A number of men are daily employed to cut down the wood in the park.

The Ock arises from two streams in Dartmoor, which unite near the town; the left, or northern rivulet, is considered the most interesting. Under the rocks at Belstone, the successive falls of the river can never be contemplated but with admiration. Independent of the form which the falling water assumes, the rich colouring of the rocks in the bed and on the sides of the river, is of the same kind as those are ornamented with, in the various streams which spring from the moor. This variety of colouring is derived from two causes, the specific character of the rocks, and the aquatic vegetation. The general soil of Dartmoor is granite and sandstone: the first of these abounds with different colours, and the latter is generally of a grey, or yellowish red: in many places on the moor, these rocks may be seen in every state of decomposition, and the roads on it are of loose gravel. The water, in its rapid progress, propels the smaller rocks; but the large masses originally in the bed of the river, remain immovably fixed: the loose gravel finding its level at the bottom, allows the water smoothly to glide over its surface; and its colour, increased by moistness, generally gives a rich and amber-like appearance to the river. The beauty of vegetation is the next object in fine rocky

scenery, by increasing the effect in colour and in form; but this is different, according to the species of rock. After the rivers leave the moor country, the soil materially changes; schistas generally succeeds granite, and huge masses of it form the bed, instead of the former; this occasions a very considerable improvement in the appearance of the river.

The granular structure of moorstone allows the constant action of rain to give it a degree of comparative smoothness, which prevents it from retaining the smallest portion of soil for the support of vegetation; the texture is so compact, that only the tenacious tribe of lichens can be supported on it; the mosses with difficulty remain on the rocks in the river; but on the sides they are more securely fixed, and are beautifully luxuriant. Not a single tuft of long grass ever adorns these rocks, so that the colour of the river arises solely from the varieties of granite. The loose lamellar structure of slate is better adapted for the support of aquatic vegetation, and where these have been in the river a considerable time, the effect is in the highest degree rich and transparent. The beautiful loose grass fantastically overhanging the water, and the dark green mosses appearing to impart their colour to it; the asphaltum-like moss near the base of the stones, trailing in the stream; and the continued moorstone gravel of amber brightness, piercing through the lucid element to a considerable depth, conspire to make this part of rivers beautiful beyond any comparison; and so rich in effect, that with the straggling branches of copse-wood, a perfect picture is formed, and the absence of full-grown wood is scarcely regretted. Above Kate's Fall, or Skaite's Fall, already mentioned, the transparent deepness of colour, and the general appearance of the river, is equal, perhaps superior, to any in

the county. The northern source of the Ock passes through the gardens of a gentleman in the town, where some fine trees overhang the river. In this charming place a bath has been formed, quite according to picturesque principles, and adapted either for the pleasure of bathing, or reposing in the seats around it, for the indulgence of reading, or of rest.

It has been already observed, that the valleys abound with frequent objects of rural beauty, and it is from them that the picturesque character of the county is really to be estimated. The more exalted species of landscape scenery, consisting of an extensive horizon prospect, with all the varieties of interesting objects from the foreground, gradually diminishing into distance, is not so general as close or confined scenery surrounded by high grounds, and enriched by transparent streams; which, in infancy, ripple over pebbles, or, in maturity, break with a loud noise over rocks, reverberating musically through the valleys. Of the former subjects which are most perfect for the pencil, the sea-coast, or the country in the vicinity of it, affords the greatest number: the interior, from the barren hills of Dartmoor (though beautiful in the horizon), wants a variety, which its cultivation, and an increase of building, might supply. Unfortunately this is not a period for elegant architecture; at least in some part of the western counties, a taste for classic simplicity in public structures is much on the decline*. This kind of beauty in a landscape is of much importance; the middle distances of a picture derive their effect from it; and domes, spires, and towers contrast delightfully with the luxuriance of woods and the ruggedness of rocks. Where the capability of the hills for improvement is great, it is much to be regretted that our general form of dwellings is not

calculated to assist nature. Nothing can be more disgusting than the outside of modern houses; no effect is studied; and even their situation appears to be influenced only by accident. The unprepossessing aspect, when near, of our Dartmoor hills, produces, a degree of prejudice in travellers, and causes every object to be viewed through a gloomy medium. The author* of a Tour through the western Counties saw nothing in a great part of Devonshire that could be called picturesque; this can only be imputed to the above cause, probably increased by a continuance of bad weather, which represses curiosity, confines the tourist to an inn, or, if travelling, to the general high road and prevents him from exploring sequestered scenes full of interest and rural beauty.

* Certain public buildings, not far from Plymouth, are a melancholy proof of this.

* Mr. Gilpin.

In the first excursion to Oakhampton this effect was unfortunately felt; the probable treasures of the valleys were forgotten, and the dilapidated castle and ruined park increased that state of the mind, which a succession for miles of bleak and barren moors occasioned. It is but justice to the scenery around Oakhampton, to mention with what pleasure I visited it a second time: though the castle and park embitter recollection, yet the rocky scenery before mentioned must make it an object of much curiosity.

The next remarkable place to Oakhampton is Drewsteinton (the town of the Druids upon the Teign). Two little villages called Zele

and Sticklepath* are passed in the road to it. The scenery of the vicinity of Drewsteinton has been celebrated by tourists, as grand and magnificent, particularly on the river Teign, near Widden Park, and near Fingal bridge. Making the usual allowance for descriptions which were sullied with much of the common cant of affected taste, my expectations were still very high; and with the remarkable Cromlech and Logan stone, both in the parish, promised full employment for the pencil.

**The following account of a picturesque scene at Sticklepath is from one of the manuscript volumes descriptive of Devon of the Rev. Mr. Swete, of Oxton House, near Exeter, whose beautiful place will be described in the second volume: the gateway, of which we give a view, was erected by himself.*



Plate 26 – The gateway of Oxton House, near Exeter.

"In a field at the west end of the village stood a chapel; it was a singularly picturesque object, placed in a most romantic spot; the river Taw, though not far distant from its source, poured down a rude valley in a stream of some size, leaping over its rocky channel and forming a succession of waterfalls as far as the eye could reach. The hills on its further bank rose majestically from the margin, at one time rough-featured with shelving crags of rocks, and at another waving with rich woods. The chapel itself, as a place of worship, was mean and humble, beyond any I had ever met with in the county appertaining to the established church; it had a roof of straw, and over its unwhitened walls, many a patch of ivy had crept; as an object, however, with its rural and wild concomitants, in a picturesque light it had more than common attraction."

The Cromlech is in an inclosed field belonging to Shilston farm, and is formed from four huge granite rocks; three being upright supporters to the fourth, which lies almost horizontally on them; the stones appear in the same rude state as those are in the adjoining moors, and to be untouched by any implement of art. The height of the table-stone from the ground, at its upper surface, is near nine feet and a half, and on an average about eight feet; the greatest length between its two most distant angles is about fifteen feet, but taken parallel to its sides about fourteen, and at a medium not above thirteen and a half; its greatest breadth ten feet; but this, measured at right angles in that part where its two opposite sides are nearly parallel, is at a medium but nine feet ten inches.



Plate 27 – Cromlech near Drewsteinton.

The upper part of this table-stone is, as usual in other cromlechs, bulging and gibbous, or, as the country people express it, saddle-backed; but its under surface, though not smoothly polished, is, or originally was, every where a plane, and free from irregular knobs or bunches*.

* *Polwhele, Historical Views.*

On the use of this species of rude structure, various dissertations have been written: some consider it as a sepulchral monument, and others as an altar for the purposes of sacrifice. When the arguments for each are so equally balanced, it is difficult to decide; where so little light is afforded by ancient history respecting the Druids (to whom this is attributed) the fancy unrestrained roams over the wide field of conjecture: but were it an object of considerable importance we should more severely regret the bewildered state of doubt and uncertainty which each hypotheses leaves. When the question respecting its use is reduced to so confined an inquiry; were it possible to ascertain either one or the other as the real cause of its erection, it becomes merely a subject for the exercise of ingenuity and of harmless and inoffensive amusement. The religious rites of the Druids were performed in the midst of groves on high places; and their altars and temples were made of rude rocks, which no tool was suffered to touch. The majestic oak was their favourite tree, and within the consecrated pale of their worship a mound of earth enclosed the whole mountain, to prevent the intrusion of the profane. The appearance of the cromlech suggests the conviction of its being Druidical; it has just so much assistance from art that it does not appear the production of nature; and when the enormous structure at Stonehenge, the impost of which are mortised, is recollected, no astonishment can arise from considering the difficulty of placing the tabular stone of this cromlech, which is simply laid on three others. It is well known that the neighbouring country is full of the same rough materials as it is composed of.

If this building were devoted to a monumental purpose, it must have been for a person of great consideration in the order, probably the

chief Druid. Whatever may have been the origin of it, its present appearance is highly picturesque; calculated to compose with fine old oaks, and the venerable figures of Druids, an historical picture of unequalled effect. The Logan stones, rocks, basins, and circular arrangement of stones, were used for the purpose of intimidating the ignorant by the mysteriousness of their character: the rocking-stone in particular they had recourse to, to confirm their authority, either as prophets or judges, pretending that its motion was miraculous.

A most extraordinary hypothesis was formed by the late Mr. Chapple*, respecting the cromlech; he considered it designed for the apparatus of an astronomical observatory, and perceived "an exact correspondence with every circle in the heavens."

** Chapple's Description and Exegesis of the Drewsteinton Cromlech.*

The first thing he mentioned was a most exact meridian line, made by the coincidence of the three supporters; that is, that the outside edges of two, and the inside edge of the third, are as truly fixed on the meridian as could possibly be done by the most accurate astronomer. The next was the latitude of the place, which was shewn by some part of the cromlech, even to the nearest minute; as were the sun's greatest meridian altitude in summer, the least in winter, and consequently the obliquity of the ecliptic; which last article afforded a most curious discovery; for, by allowing the known diminution of the obliquity, he found that upwards of two thousand two hundred years had elapsed since the cromlech was erected. After describing these and many other astronomical properties, he said, he

had lastly discovered that the cover-stone was inscribable in an ellipsis; and that the cromlech served also for gnomonical purposes he had the most positive proof; for by its construction he found that there was a certain point under the cromlech, whence reflections should be cast; and by removing the earth from that spot, he discovered a curious little triangular stone, which must have been placed there for that purpose*.

* *Historical Views of Devonshire.*

An extensive piece of water, called Bradford Pool, is near the cromlech; it is only a neglected tin-pit, but the banks are planted, and it is altogether a pleasing scene. The Logan-stone is on the banks of the Teign near the edge of the river: except when the water is increased by the freshets after rain, it remains untouched by the rapid stream; its weight is said to be about twenty tons. It has a perceptible vibratory motion on the continued pressure of the hand for a few minutes, when the least momentum will prolong its rocking: until within these few years its motion was very considerable, and the smallest force was sufficient for the purpose; but the curiosity of some labourers being excited by the mysteriousness of its character, they endeavoured by the greatest efforts of their united strength to overturn it; however, the quantity of exertion applied being fortunately inadequate, they were unable to effect their foolish purpose. The exact point on which it was poised was not ascertained; extraneous matter might have prevented it, but from the etching it appears to cover such a surface, that there may be various places of contact, arising from the accident of having been moved off its original position, as related above. It is still the subject

of doubt, whether it is to be attributed to nature or to art; from whichever it arose, it is very probable, as rocky places were imagined by the Druids to be favourite haunts of their gods, that it was used by them for some religious purpose.

The scenery of this part of the Teign consists of very bold features; the hills are high, and many are enriched with coppice-wood: the river in its character resembles the others which proceed from the moor; near the Logan-stone the fine oaks of Widden Park overhang the water. Notwithstanding these requisites, there were no very interesting scenes which would form pictures; nothing, that with strict propriety could be classed as being eminently of a picturesque character. Delightful as every part of nature is in the religious sentiments which it awakens, the peculiarities of form or colour create no material difference, and the most simple vegetable production astonishes more than things of greatness or magnitude: but picturesque pleasure arises from the combination and variety of objects, the harmony of colours, the general coincidence of all the parts, and particularly by the rejection in natural objects of uniformity and smoothness. The hills over the Teign have a sameness of appearance, a family likeness with each other, which excite no pleasurable emotion; in their height there is dignity, but an unvaried smooth outline, and a want of objects, is their predominating character: this prevented my making a single sketch, and the different aspects of the Logan-stone were my only compensation for the fatigue of exploring the banks of the river. The country about Fingal bridge is of the same kind; but as this was seen under the disadvantage of a misty atmosphere, it is but justice to suspend opinion on its merits, when the face of nature is so different

under the cheerless influence of rain, from the animation and warmth of sunshine.

The First Part of these Excursions concludes here; the Author, grateful for the very liberal encouragement he has experienced, will exert himself to render the continuation of the Work not less deserving of success. The materials for the Second Part are in considerable forwardness, and it will be published without delay; in the interim, he solicits the communication of such local information or curious facts as may suit the nature of his undertaking.

THE END OF THE THIRD EDITION.



